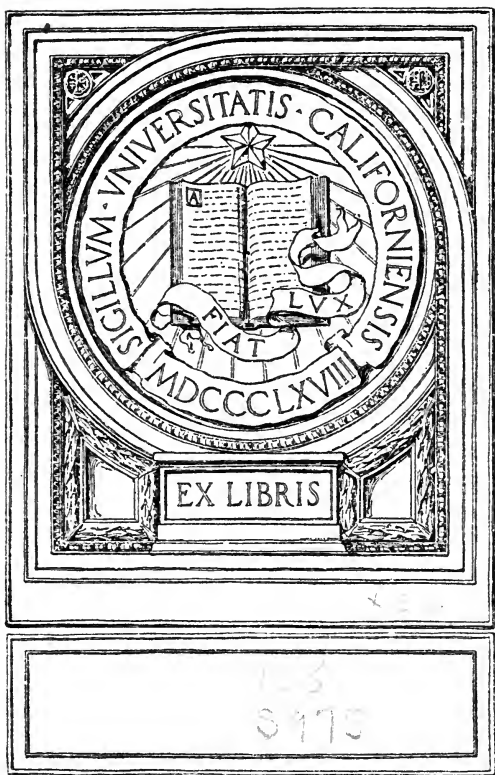


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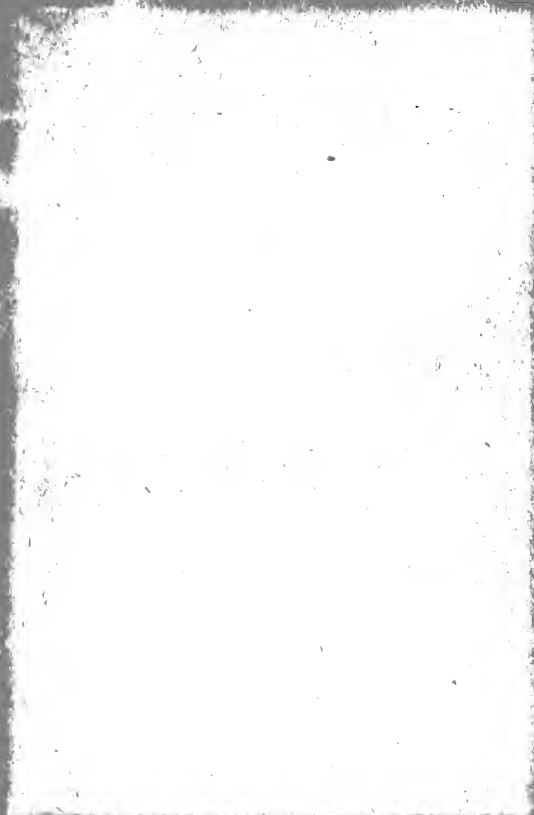


AND PERHAPS

SIR FRANK SWETTENHAM



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PITON DES NEIGES FROM MATARUM, RÉUNION

# ALSO & PERHAPS

BY

SIR FRANK SWETTENHAM



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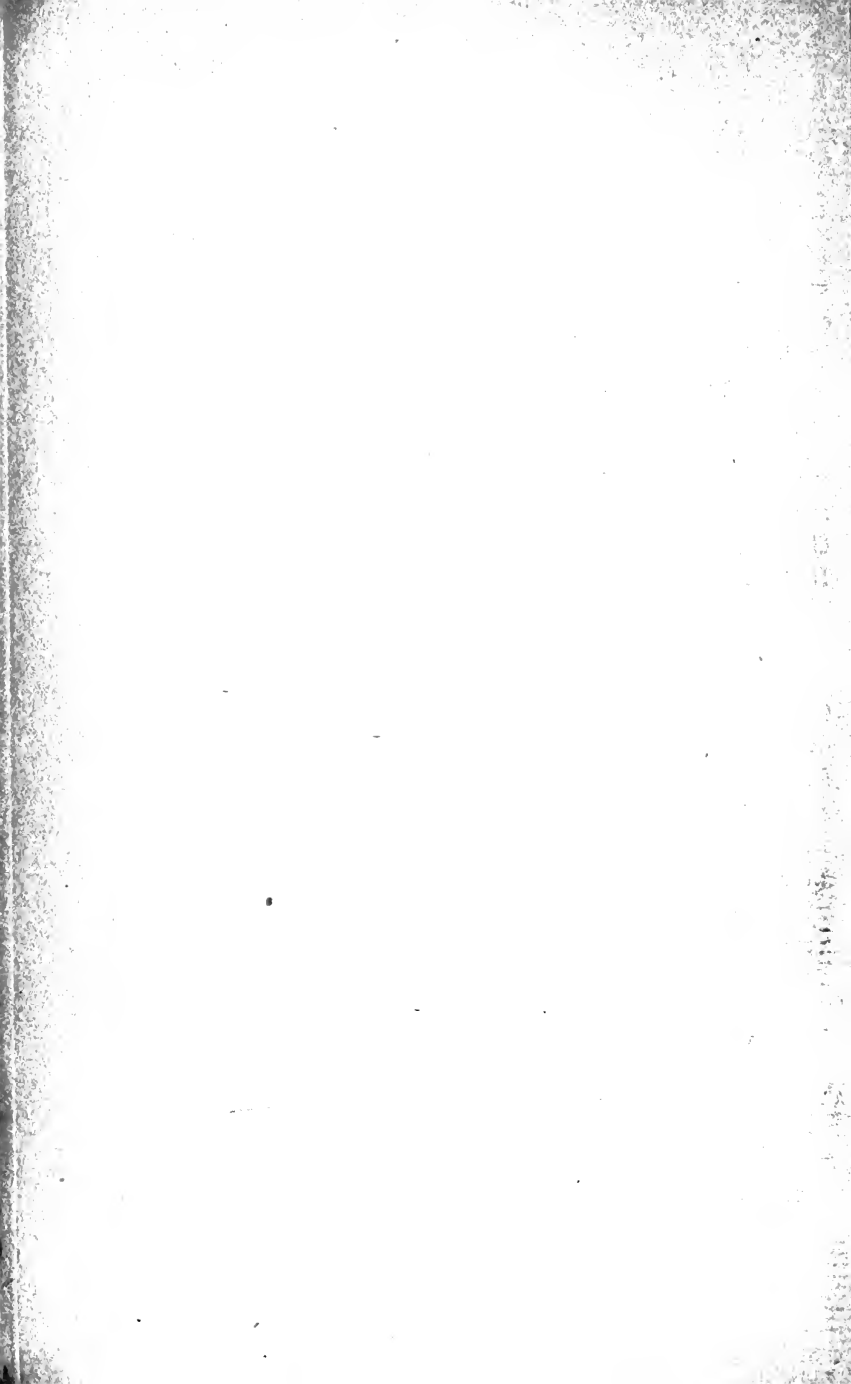
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## FIRST AND LAST LOVE

MODERN science declares that first love is "absolutely antecedent to all relative experience whatever,"<sup>1</sup> while philosophy and science are said to agree that "the lovers themselves have no choice, they are merely the subjects of an influence."<sup>2</sup> If it is only "first love" which is antecedent to all relative experience, then what of second and third and  $n^{\text{th}}$  love? And again, if the lovers themselves have no choice in the matter, and are merely the subjects of an influence, presumably they have no choice in the death of that love, and they are in no way responsible for that lamentable, or desirable, ending to what is described by science and philosophy as a state of temporary madness. This is a comfortable, and yet an uncomfortable, theory; and it may be questioned whether philosophers and scientists are unimpeachable authorities on a question which, possibly, has less attraction for them than for the rest of us, who are "mostly fools." It is doubtful whether the modern

<sup>1</sup> Herbert Spencer—*Principles of Psychology*.

<sup>2</sup> Lafcadio Hearn—*Kokoro*.

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scientist would consent to argue on such a subject ; but, if it were permitted, I should like to ask for an exact definition of first love. For there are some men and many women (or it may be put the other way, it is perhaps presumptuous to make any such distinction), who cannot remember clearly the first time they fell in love ; but, after a long and varied experience, they believe that the last passion, if not the only real one, is at least that which has most deeply stirred them. Often they are right.

It may be said of some that they had their earliest love-affairs when they were still in the nursery ; but, probably, science takes no note of these precocious and immature passions, though perhaps some allowance may be made for the influences of latitude. If the consideration be confined to persons of a marriageable age, there is still a sufficient margin for practical purposes.

Dismissing, therefore, the "calf-love" period in both sexes, and counting early experiences as mere target practice, we are told that first love is "absolutely antecedent to all relative experience whatever," and this statement is explained to mean that love is not an individual matter at all, but that the dead, and not the living, are responsible for it.

No riddle can be so attractive as this riddle of love, especially as the scientists and philosophers do not pretend to have solved it entirely yet. They have

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dogmatised about it a little, and it is disappointing to think that the theories, as far as they go, are qualified by the statement that they deal with "first love" only. That is why an exact description of this special form of the disease would be a necessity in a serious inquiry into the origin and propagation of the micro-organism of love.

We are told that the victims of first love are the subjects of an influence for which the Dead are solely responsible; and to solve the enigma of why the Dead, using Him as their instrument, want that particular Her, it is hazarded that, "they want her because there survives in her, as in some composite photograph, the suggestion of each and all who loved them in the past. But there is the possibility also that they want her because there reappears in her something of the multitudinous charm of all the women they loved in vain."<sup>1</sup>

Being neither a scientist nor a philosopher, it seems to me that there may be other possibilities—an extensive and attractive vista to which there is no limit. But if this theory, of the irresponsibility of lovers in their first loves, be accepted, the dangers to society seem considerable. From the point of reason alone there is doubtless a good deal to recommend it, but reason would probably favour what is natural against what is artificial, and that teaching, if generally

<sup>1</sup> Lafcadio Hearn—*Kokoro*.

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accepted, would also have its dangers. Still, if the lovers have no choice, if they are the victims of an influence ; if they, being irresponsible, must give way to the influence and its consequences—possibly very inconvenient, even distressful consequences—may not the lovers cry *væ mortuis*, and who shall cast the first stone ?

Then, after this first madness is over and done with, what of the second and subsequent loves ? Are not the lovers still the subjects of an influence, the influence of the Dead ? Surely there can be no hard and fast line between first and second love. If modern science, following ancient philosophy, has discovered that first love is not an individual matter at all, but simply an exercise of undue influence on the part of the still unsatisfied Dead, it will not say that these lovers, after their first experience, are *lancés* and responsible for subsequent passions, which also must be inherited from near and remote ancestors. Granting the irresponsibility of the Living, it is difficult, even impossible, to fix the responsibility of the Dead, for no single ghost will accept it ; the heritage is the accumulated passion, longing, and regret, of millions—a nation's Dead.

Yet, if I am wrong, if the Dead are only responsible for the first love, or the first two or three loves, of the Living, and we gradually grow out of the range of this malign influence and are allowed some exercise of individual will, some tiny twig to graft upon the huge

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tree of heredity ; then that freedom of choice may assert itself in our last love, may atone to us for all the mistakes made while ministering to the concentrated desires of millions of ancestors, striving through our poor bodies to indulge their special predilections for light hair or dark, brown eyes or blue. And when, at last, their wants have been satisfied and their baleful influence wanes, we seek for ourselves a kindred soul, and "if God prosper us past human hope," we may then attain to the ideal unattainable, the other self, never known by those haunting troubled Dead.

Without saying

"I think all this is a lie, you know ;"

one may yet venture to doubt this scientific theory of love, if not altogether, at least in part. Because it is repugnant to our feelings. Because it is impossible to prove. Because, although there is something to support it, there is not enough, even of likelihood, to convince us that the theory has more than a leaven of truth in it. Then, are scientists likely to have enough practical experience of this subject to enable them to speak with special authority upon it? To the scientist, love is probably like the moon, something to look at through a telescope, with little hope, and perhaps small desire, of arriving at contact. If, however, stray individuals of the class have experience thrust upon them, they regard it as a form of ailment, like measles—catching,

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but generally harmless—common in early years, rare and decidedly disagreeable if met with in later life. People, with whom science is more than a name, or an amusement, have seldom time or inclination for the absorbing and exacting demands of a great passion.

Beyond these considerations there seem to be two strong objections to the doctrine of the responsibility of the Dead, and the consequent irresponsibility of the Living, who, for the moment are simply being used as the instruments of a resistless power, the power of heredity. One is the force of circumstances, of time and place, of season and opportunity; matters over which the Dead can hardly be expected to exercise control. The other is that, to be logical, there could be no finality in this evolutionary love. We, in our time, should never see perfection, never know the absolute sympathy, the exact community of interest, the equal intensity of passion, the love which casteth out fear, and

“one with that it loves  
In Undivided Being blends.”

But it is certain that many people have been attracted to each other by certain tricks of circumstance, without which they would have regarded each other with mutual indifference for all time. The accident, with certain temperaments, may serve them well. With others, a union thus brought about will end in disaster,



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when the glamour of the moment, the footlights, the music, the applauding audience, and the whole *mise-en-scène*,—have disappeared, and the two principal actors realise that, in future, they cannot count on these adventitious surroundings, and must rely on each other to supply the entire interest of the play, in a piece which must run, without change, for the lifetime of one or other of the players.

Then, if there has been a mistake, and these generations of Dead do not know their own minds (as very probably would be the case), are the Living to be made victims of the immoral or irresolute caprices of their ancestors? When we see a man make a fool of himself over a little fluffy-haired, pale-eyed blonde, and, when he has managed to get rid of her, fall pathetically or extravagantly in love with a tall majestic brunette, what is the scientific explanation if one may not suggest that, having narrowly escaped Charybdis, he, of his own folly, courts shipwreck on Scylla?

Granting the inherited tendencies, is there no individual exercise of will? The man of science says the will, or the weakness, is also inherited. Even so, has not the individual the control of it, so far as he can control anything? His feelings are probably as much his own in one sense as in another. He may possibly have inherited a liking for whiskey and a dislike for music: but he may still choose to drink water or wine and persuade himself that he is really

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fond of oratorios. Again, there are the influences of a stronger will, or example, of education, of surroundings, and these often mould a character into something quite different from what it would otherwise have been. The things we liked in childhood become insipid, and those we either loathed, or regarded with absolute indifference, often grow most desirable. It is the same with the people we meet : some, as years go by, we like better, some less ; of some we grow weary, others we find out ; while a few, "the loveliest and the best," as they seem to us, stir our highest feelings, and for their sakes we are ready to suffer all things and sacrifice fortune, honour, or life itself. If we do evil it is not condoned as the work of our great-grandfathers, for which we are not responsible ; and if we do well, the credit is neither withheld from us, nor apportioned amongst the more reputable of our ancestors. That may be because the great majority do not understand ; but at present the majority are unconvinced and masterful.

Yet, in this matter of the affections, there are many who are willing to let the first love go, as something which took them unawares, when they were still unprepared, for their share in which it would be hardly fair to hold them responsible. They would be glad to move the burden of their impulsive rashness, their inexperience, their mistakes, from off their own shoulders and ascribe the whole business to the influence of their dead and buried ancestry. It is not always possible to

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do this successfully. But, as time goes on and experience teaches, individuals are less inclined to err, while they are more likely to recognise their true mate, the *alter ego*, or to give up the quest as hopeless. As for those who are so marvellously fortunate as to find the companion who fulfils their every want (and there are some few who do find), the Earthly Paradise is theirs; and while they want no other, the fear of losing it by death is small compared with the amazing delight of possession.

This is not the teaching of the world, which holds that love, the passionate and lasting adoration of two human beings, indifferent in this sense to all others, is but a delusion, a rhapsodist's fable, a carnal desire the indulgence of which brings about its own death. The very conception of love is beyond the reach of many, and to some it implies only a sinful idolatry. Yet a few, a very few, obtain their heart's desire, and, in exchange for that, the world has nothing to offer, which they would count as gain.

Given the capacity for a grand passion, in the fullest and completest sense of those words, and given that reciprocal admiration and attraction which, after the first intoxication of love returned, realises that the closest intimacy reveals only unguessed graces of mind and form, greater depths of affection; then, if the gods add also the blessing of understanding, there will be for these two a fulness of joy and life, compared with

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which principalities and powers and other things temporal and to come, will seem of small account. Never to misunderstand, that is the great secret. It covers so much. Not to expect the unreasonable, not to be disappointed with the obviously natural; not to forget that however close in sympathy a man and woman may be, they are differently constituted and cannot have identical inclinations at every moment of their lives. And then, not to misunderstand is not to imagine that a momentary disinclination, an absent-minded remark, means a change of feeling, or a sudden drying up of the wells of affection. Not to misunderstand, that is almost everything.

A supreme passion, a boundless faith; mutual admiration and respect, a community of interests, perfect sympathy, a desire to sacrifice self, daily and hourly, in proof of love; a determination never to misunderstand, never to conceal, never to lie; a conviction that nothing, whether it be a desire, an inclination or a purpose, is worth having unless it is shared, completely shared by both; this and this only, is the infinite good, the Last Love.

## THE KALEIDOSCOPE OF LIFE

**Y**OU know the simple mechanism of the kaleidoscope. It contains minute pieces of coloured glass, and, as you move the toy, the bits of crystal form new and unexpected combinations. One looks at the same objects, but under different conditions. A slight change of position throws a new light on them, and their many-sidedness favours strange and picturesque groupings. I have often thought that Fate-linked human lives, seen at different points on the tiny orbit of their destinies, bear a certain quaint resemblance to the changing effects produced by the fragments of glass as, by a force beyond their control, they are re-arranged in successive colour-schemes. Yet they can never break the spell which ties them to each other.

One might make an interesting game, by putting the eye of imagination to the kaleidoscope of life and then describe all one sees. Let me try to explain what I mean by an example. You understand that, in my plaything, I not only see all the details of the pictures, but I can hear what

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the actors say, and, if need be, read what is passing in their minds.

I see an orchard crowning a hill which overlooks a village made notable by a number of massive, square, half-ruined towers: giant stalks, that seem to have grown up to different heights and then withered, bearing neither flower nor fruit. A woman and a man are sitting on the grass beneath the trees. They are talking, lazing, and, while they trifle with the material loaf of bread and jug of wine, they are drinking deeply from the cup of human happiness.

This orchard occupies almost the highest point of that strange place. The grass, which carpets the ground between the olives, is thick and green; the enclosing wall is ancient and moss-grown, with a ruined embrasure in one corner. The sun is high and makes brilliant emerald patches between the shadows that underlie the silver-grey trees. I realise that the woman has a face of high intelligence and striking beauty, but the man is more remarkable. Though little over thirty, his close-cropped but deeply-waved hair is white, with the whiteness of hair that is powdered, while his eyebrows, his moustache—with upturning ends—and his eyelashes are jet black. His eyes are grey-blue, and while their expression is constantly varying under the black lashes, one notes especially their exceeding brilliance. His complexion

## KALEIDOSCOPE OF LIFE

is fair, but he is tanned by the sun. He is tall, broad-shouldered and deep-chested, spare and muscular, with a perceptible waist, flat hips and thighs, small hands and feet. The two friends, for evidently they are friends, look down on those lofty towers, which make such a feature in the landscape. They marvel at the mania, which must have possessed the dead and forgotten owners, to spend their substance in erecting the extraordinary monuments of pride and folly which now stand among the hills, the guardians of a half-deserted village.

There is not a dwelling of any size remaining ; far more than half the towers have fallen ; the rest are crumbling away, and there is nothing left but a civic building, a church or two, and an *albergo*, to suggest the departed glories of the Middle Ages.

I recognise the place ; it is unique in its way, and, besides the towers, there are Pinturricchio's charming picture of the Madonna, in the Palazzo Pubblico, and the splendid altar-piece of Benedetto da Majano in the Church of La Pieve. Doubtless these visitors have duly admired them, and, knowing that the resources of the *albergo* are not to be relied upon, they have brought their luncheon and carried it to that ancient orchard, whence they can gaze their fill on the glorious expanse of undulating country, as the afternoon sun-rays slant across the bare hills of Tuscany.

I know the travellers have come from a neigh-

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bouring town, and my divining-glass tells me that they have strolled through its narrow streets ; examined the buildings surrounding the small stone-paved piazza, where horse-races are run on carpets ; they have looked in wonder and delight on the lovely façade of the cathedral, criticised the *graffito* in the paved floor of the nave, and revelled in the brilliant glimpses of blue sky and low country fields seen from the vantage-ground of that high-perched mediæval town. They have driven to the Campo Santo and gazed on its lovely *Pietà*, and they have stood in wrapt admiration of Sodoma's great fresco of the ecstasy of St. Catherine, patron Saint of the Tuscan city. They have "done" it all, leisurely and pleasantly, and now they have made this journey into the quiet country for rest, and air, for the strange vision of those thirteen towers and the delights of solitude *à deux*. Well, they have their reward !

. . . . .

Ah ! something shook my hand and the kaleidoscope moved. What a marvellous change !

On the outskirts or a great town, by the edge of a wonderful bay, whose waters shine like molten silver under a moon of extraordinary brilliance, I see a great, white, modern building. The myriad windows glow with bright lights, and from one, high up, o'erlooking the calm sea, there leans a woman ; a woman of glorious beauty, listening to a band of minstrels grouped in the road beneath. They are singing, to



## KALEIDOSCOPE OF LIFE

an accompaniment of mandolins, with all their faces turned upwards towards that lovely apparition. The waters of the bay shimmer in the white light, and the hulls, spars and cordage of many vessels, of divers builds and rigs, stand out against sky and sea as though etched with a sharp black point on a silver ground. In middle distance, where the shore curves outwards, projecting a point of low land into the water, frowns a massive, sombre castle, whose black walls cast a deep shadow half across the bay. Acres and acres of white houses, thousands upon thousands of twinkling lights, carry the eye up from the shore, to what seems a considerable height and distance inland. A lofty mountain, from whose cone-crowned summit rises a thick wreath of smoke, shuts in the distance. A lurid light, only occasionally visible, underlies the dark cloud of smoke, and shoots forth fitful gleams of fire, to illuminate the lava-coloured slopes as with flashes of summer lightning from a thunder cloud.

I see the woman at the window distinctly. She is dressed in a soft, clinging garment of dull gold-coloured brocade, against which her neck, uncovered and unjewelled, gleams with dazzling whiteness. Her hair, dark brown with a chestnut tinge, frames her brow with waving curls, defines the lines of a shapely head, and lies, in a great knot, low on her neck; wonderful eyes, soft and dark with love-light, shine through dewy lashes that curl up to distinctly-marked

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and arching eyebrows. A straight nose, with the merest pretence at upwardness, just what gives character to a face ; a mouth and a chin of delightful curves, instinct with feeling ; and a complexion that defies criticism. That is what I see, and I realise that nature has given a figure in keeping with the face. In the shadow of the curtain is a man's form, and, as I look, an arm and a hand—a rather noticeable hand—are stretched from the window, and some coins fall into the street, far below.

The music ceases, the minstrels doff their hats, and one of them says : "*Grazia tanto ! Che cosa vuole la Signora ?*"

A woman's voice answers from the window, "*La Seranata d'un innamorata.*" As the hats are again raised from the up-turned faces, the mandolin-players strike a few chords, and, through the stillness of the clear, moonlit night, a tenor voice begins to sing the passionate love-song.

I bent forward to listen, and of course the picture disappeared. In its place I see another. It is the head of a valley, and its two sides, here including a vary narrow angle, diverge from this point till, four or five miles away, they have widened out so far that their lies between them a great city, standing white and stately on a low shore which half-encircles a Mediterranean bay of sapphire water. The valley is

## KALEIDOSCOPE OF LIFE

completely filled by trees of dark, glossy foliage, heavily laden with ripe fruit, "orange lanterns in a green night." It is the *Conca d'oro*. At the head of the valley stands a magnificent cathedral, a glorious edifice, worthy of that unrivalled site. The windows of the episcopal palace, attached to the *Basilica*, glitter with changing prismatic colours in the clear sunlight, and beneath them, spanning the valley, is a broad terrace, with stone balustrades and steps leading down into the cool shade of the orange gardens. Great yew trees spread their branches over gravel and wall and steps. The lights are almost blinding, and the shadows dark and sharp and motionless. There is a sense of extraordinary peace and quiet—a world-forgetting world-forgottenness—that is infinitely restful. On the terrace, under the shadow of a giant yew, are a man and woman: they are leaning over the grey balustrade, gazing across the Golden Shell to the distant city, the sapphire sea, the hills of varying height and bewildering shades of colour. It cannot be the exquisite picture, and their intense appreciation of it, which leaves them tongue-tied. There is something in their faces which I try to read, but it baffles me. In his is a hopeless sadness, and in hers a bewildering doubt. She is torn by some suspicion—jealousy perhaps—and though she is making a brave fight, she will be worsted. He does not understand, and evidently he cannot, or will not, provoke an

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explanation. Interest in them has drawn all my thoughts from the marvellous surroundings. I wonder—could anything be more annoying. I was on the point of reading the riddle, when in my keen excitement, I suppose my hand shook and, like the gradual development of a negative, has come another scene.

. . . . .

It is far up the side of a steep mountain, which rises sheer from the waters of that same "tideless summer sea." The mountain slopes are green with short grass, in which stands, here and there, an almond tree smothered in white blossoms. Rising from the grass are the high red walls of a very ancient Greek Theatre. It is in marvellous preservation. The whole of the auditorium, the half-circle of stone seats, rising, tier above tier, with all the steps and passages, are perfect. But, more strange still, the graceful pillars of the stage are but slightly injured, and little effort of imagination would be necessary to picture the players speaking their lines to the closely packed, classically garbed audience. Only, that would take one to a century before the Christian Era. The back of the stage is not shut in; there is a wall, but it is pierced by great openings, huge empty doorways, and through these spaces can be seen the matchless background which makes this spot at once the loveliest, and amongst those of deepest interest, on earth. The spectator, on a bench of that ever-rising and ever-

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widening semicircle of seats, looks across the auditorium, past the pillared stage, through the openings in the wall, out to the turf-carpeted hillside with its blossoming fruit tress, and thence down to the bay-indented shore, where once stood a famous city. But now the blue waters break, measuredly, in narrow crests of white foam against the yellow sands. The shore-line runs straight from the spectator's eye into distance, and from it rise low hills, increasing in height as they get further inland. Far away beyond and above all intervening objects, towers a huge mountain mass, snow-covered for the topmost third of its height. From the apex spreads a grey wreath of smoke, sometimes dark and heavy, suggestive of the destruction that, through the ages, has poured from this open flue over vineyard and orchard and doomed city.

On the parapet of the highest tier of seats in the ancient theatre are standing the same man and woman who gazed in silence over the *Conca d'oro*. Now they are looking at each other. The woman speaks often, the man seldom. There is scorn in her face, and she is plainly speaking "winged words," under which the man writhes silently. She ceases, and says the one word, "Well?"; says it with unconcealed passion, unmitigated contempt. He is not less angered; she has meant to rouse him and has succeeded. But he simply says, "you are wrong." Indignantly she

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declines to accept the denial and appeals to the evidence of her own senses. Then losing control of herself, or to goad him to some explanation, she says, "Do not make it worse by lying!" For a moment he looks at her amazed; then he says, "I thank you; I did not lie to you, but I will say no more. Let us go, it is getting late." But she will not, and says, "What am I to do? I cannot believe you, unless you explain what seems inexplicable."

. . . . .

You will ask me what there was to explain, and how it ended, suggesting that very likely I am dreaming about some Greek Play—the result of the association of the Greek Theatre.

How am I to describe what I do not see? Like Balaam, I can but speak what is given me to say. Of course, just when I particularly wished to see and hear more, some slight movement disarranged the pieces and they have reformed in an utterly different combination.

There is nothing here; the *mise-en-scène* is *banale* to a degree; a situation, you would say, of that commonplace kind that one naturally avoids; while I, in the delightful spirit of contradiction, urge that it is of that everyday occurrence that is most natural.

It is early in the morning, but it is hot, for the sun—a sun with real heat in it—has been up some time. The place is evidently un-English, but it is in Europe. A steep dusty road leads from the country to the out-

## KALEIDOSCOPE OF LIFE

skirts of a town, and down it drives an open carriage containing a woman, a man and some luggage. With much whip-cracking, and sundry expressions in the horse-language of a foreign tongue, the driver rattles his team through strings of market people, and droves of sheep and cattle, into the wide open space before a railway-station.

The travellers leave the carriage and go into the station, whither the luggage is also carried. The platform is crowded with people. All sorts and conditions of men, women and children, but none of the same nationality as the two who have just joined the throng. In features, in height, and in dress, there is a striking difference between these Northerners and the short often dark, usually dumpy, folk about them. A long train is waiting by the platform, and it is already well filled when the man finds a seat in it. Evidently the journey is for him alone, and it seems likely to be a long one. There is not too much time left for partings, and yet these two walk slowly up and down speaking seldom. There are tears in the woman's eyes, and something very like them in the man's voice, and they say little because they understand. The passengers are told to take their seats; doors are shut, the huge ugly locomotive whistles, and with a pressure of the hands, and tender parting words, of which the burden is; "Please, please don't; indeed you must not break down, it is bad enough without that"—the man

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gets to his place and the train moves off in a sudden silence broken by the monotonous strokes of a signal-bell. He leans from the window, and, as the train gains motion, he sees the woman standing half-dazed, as the tears well from her eyes and slowly follow each other down her cheeks.

. . . . .

The glass through which I was looking grew suddenly dim ; I wiped it and readjusted the kaleidoscope, but I saw nothing. Perhaps that was the end.



## ALSO

II O'CLOCK

WHEN the presentation had been made, she said—meaning to cover him with confusion—"I saw you in Bond Street the other day, and I think you followed me."

"I dare say," he replied, "I have been often to the Tate Gallery to see less beautiful pictures, and you know it is a long way to Chelsea."

"You disarm me by that pretty speech," she said, "and I really meant to be very severe."

"But you only thought, you were not sure," he said, "and it is dangerous to found theories on mere assumption. There was a woman I knew, a very pretty woman, but she had enemies of her own sex who declared she was always making eyes at men. So, on a day, one of these, 'meaning to be very severe,' said to her: 'you need not make eyes at me, I am not a man!' 'No!' replied the pretty lady, 'that is apparent, but I was not looking at you—there was a man behind you.'"

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"From which I am to draw the inference that you were following some one else?"

"You are to draw no inferences, because they are so dangerous, and nearly always so wide of the mark. I may have been in an abstracted mood, trying to compose a sonnet, or I may have been looking earnestly for butterflies."

"Bond Street is hardly the place either for sonnets or butterflies."

"Pardon me, I should say it is full of both."

"Oh! I give you up."

"Please do not do that, I am so anxious to be made a captive, and it is so disappointing to be given up before one has had a chance of proving whether one is worth keeping. You don't know how useful I can be; and, now that I have been presented with all due formality, may I be permitted humbly to differ. There is a sonnet at every corner of Bond Street, one may realise that, even if one cannot string the lines; and, as for butterflies, on a fine day the air is full of them: some clad in the gossamer and brilliant colours of the tropics, and others, not less attractive, in more sober hues."

"Do you then take your walks in London with a net?"

"No! I am not so bold; but you still mistake me. I did not say I was collecting, merely that I might have been admiring the beauties of nature—and

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art. If I said there were more lions, or lionesses, in the streets of London than in the deserts of Libya you would not for that reason expect to see me carrying a rifle."

"Perhaps not, but, if you can be sensible, let us sit down, and you can tell me who some of these people are. If I see any of my own relatives or friends I will tell you before you commit yourself."

"Thank you, that is very thoughtful; and, as I have just had to apologise for being so awkward as to tread on your gown, I will tell you what I heard the other night. I think the occasion must have been a dance, but it might have been hunt-the-slipper or Punch and Judy; I saw nothing except a succession of splendid rooms full of people, and it took me a long time to travel ten feet after I had shaken hands with my hostess at the top of the stairs. I was hemmed in on all sides, and quite unable to move, when I noticed, close to me, a man wearing spectacles gazing vacantly at the ceiling and trying to get along. He had succeeded in climbing as far as was possible up the gown of a woman in front of him, and he was *planté là*. Though she, poor woman, could not move her feet, she was able to twist her head round far enough to glare at the offender and, with the deliberation of a sweet disposition over-tried, she said, 'Would you mind leaving me something to go home in?' The man's confusion was rather pitiable, and in his frantic efforts

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to 'climb down' he trod on so many tender feet that I think he was forced downstairs by the outraged guests."

"I am always interested to hear a story at first hand, for it is the rarest thing in the world to hear anything worth repeating—I mean anything spontaneous—and the source of a really original story is usually as obscure as the other side of the moon. Who is that handsome woman who has just come in?"

"She is a straight-riding Countess, not necessarily, or in fact, the wife of a counter-jumper."

"Thank you, the disclaimer was needless."

"Do not be so severe; it sounds like a barbarous play on words, but I am always interested in the eccentricities of my mother tongue and, after all, it is a more harmless subject for discussion than many others."

"I suppose you mean more harmless than answering my questions in regard to some of our fellow guests."

"Again I must beg you not to draw conclusions and if I can satisfy your curiosity I will."

"Then who is that stout man with a scarf across his waistcoat and a large locket hanging from a ribbon round his neck. Is he an 'Odd fellow,' or is he an Anglo-Indian wearing what is called a kamar-band?"

"He is neither. The 'kamar-band' is not worn like that but round the place where once the man had a waist. It is a link between body and soul, the veil which hides the place of departed spirits, a kind of equator found in the tropics but unknown in these

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latitudes. The man was, till recently, our Ambassador somewhere and that 'scarf' is the ribbon of the Bath. He has been abroad so long that he is forgotten here, and as you see, no one seems to know him."

"I sympathise for I have been away, and there are always so many new faces in London that it is easy to feel a stranger."

"If you feel that now, it cannot last for more than twenty-four hours."

"I have not been away so far or so long that I have forgotten how to recognise the voice of flattery."

"I am rather surprised for it would be difficult to flatter you, unless one were fantastic. I am not seeking for time to devise the bewildering lie, I am only expressing my thoughts. It is the *effort* of lying which makes flattery ridiculous; convictions are inoffensive until they are expressed."

"If you know that why do you not observe the rule?"

"Because I prefer exceptions and I am not ashamed to be sincere."

"I think, after all, my curiosity is more harmless than your sincerity, so tell me who is that very fair and somewhat ample lady who is purring over our host?"

"She is one of those who long for invitations to dine in certain houses, in the belief that the feasts will give

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pleasure ; whereas they give only indigestion and regret."

"I rather like your method. You never really tell me more than half I ask. There is no doubt about indigestion, but I might want to know why regret."

"I am talking to your intelligence and you know perfectly the disappointments of the average diners which leave a feeling of regret. There is the person she wanted to sit next, the neighbours she actually had ; the gown which one woman wore and the jewels of another ; the thing she was dying to say but the opportunity never came. I see you smile, because you know it all better than I do, and because you have led me into the stupidity of making an explanation. Of course one should never explain, and I will tell you another piece of wisdom, it is this, if you ever think of saying something but, before doing so, ask yourself whether you should say it or not, never say it. If however your doubt is whether or not you should do something, always do it. If, for instance, I were thinking of repeating an unkind story it would be better to keep silence ; but if I were thinking of doing something to oblige you —no, we won't discuss that—if a man was intentionally rude to me and I wondered whether I should hit him or not, it is better to hit him quickly. If some one falls into the water and I am going to help, I must not think very long or I feel sure I should not go in at all."

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"You may be right ; at any rate it is easier to say nothing than to risk one's life for a stranger, or even for a friend."

"Yes, indeed, 'kind hearts are more than coronets,' just as Dover Street gowns are more than either strawberry or fig-leaves."

"Perhaps. But I don't think 'kind hearts' have much to do with self sacrifice of the highest order."

"I agree, and some other day, if you will allow me, I should like to talk to you about the curious attribute called courage. I have seen men whose courage was indisputable do very curious and uncourageous things. In a very sudden emergency, which seems to threaten one's own safety, I am sure it is an excellent thing to make yourself think for a moment ; otherwise you may find that your legs have walked away with you without your being conscious of it. You will then spend the rest of your life trying to explain to yourself how it happened, while you explain to others that it never happened at all."

"I suppose you agree that nothing so misleads as the truth when one is expected to lie, how would it do in the case you describe ?"

"It might not mislead, but it would do much better than anything else. It is not a very nice thing for a man to have to say he ran away from something dangerous to his skin, but as I have known gallant men to do—on the spur of the moment—what seemed

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incredible, I should say it is better not to deny it but to speak the truth and make the best story you can of it."

"That might need more courage than to have faced the emergency."

"Granted, and the second kind of courage is rarer than the first. The subject is too large to discuss here and now, and I am so interested I would prefer not to run the risk of boring you. Tell me rather why good temper in man is often the cause of ill-temper in woman."

"If that is a general proposition I am not prepared to accept it. If you confine it to married people there are many reasons which might account for your seeming paradox, but I don't think an explanation from me would be profitable to you, and besides you have told me one should never explain."

"I suppose you refuse to grant my very reasonable request because the fulfilment of one wish means greater freedom to wish again; and, perhaps, having learned to recognise the importunate, you also know how to deal with first requests."

"Also, yes; perhaps, no. Importunity never appeals to me; neither can I see any attraction in the pursuit of something which seeks to escape, unless the object be to kill it."

"I agree absolutely. I never even want the things I see in shop-windows if I know I cannot pay for them."



## A|L S O

It shows a great want of originality to hanker after some other man's wife or *chère amie*, and the search after other people's secrets is far less exciting than the discovery of your own."

"I am beginning to find it rather an effort to talk to you. I have to think, or to feel that I am missing some of your meaning, and no one ever thinks now except when alone."

"I realise that truth most of all when I attend a fashionable race-meeting, for there you will find people saying what they do not mean to others who are not listening, because they are trying to catch the eyes of some one who is looking elsewhere."

"If that is what you see, and I do not pretend you are mistaken, I suppose you go to such places but seldom."

"Hardly ever, but when I do go it is always in the hope that I may find it different."

"In fact you do evil that good may come !"

"If you like to put it in that way, and I don't mind telling you that it is better to do evil that good may come than to do it without hope of gain."

"That would depend upon the exact definition of 'gain.'"

"I am not a political speaker, but if that is an invitation to supply the exact definition I shall ask you to excuse me. I will say this, however, I was not

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thinking of the gain which sometimes comes from the backing of race-horses."

"I did not suppose you were, but all the same I dare say you would be ready to give or take the odds."

"Yes, to win ; but not for a place."

"One must have faith to play for a big stake."

"Faith and much more. Have you ever realised how powerful a factor faith is in our lives, and how the possession of it will save us from a great deal here, as surely as it will save us altogether hereafter. If you have faith in your hat—as I feel sure you have—it ought to save you from the expense of buying another, and if a man has faith in the attractions of his own wife he will be saved from divers disappointments and unpleasantnesses. But if you have faith do not be extravagant with it. If it should lead you to back the turn of a card, an American security, or the numbers on a roulette-board, you may be led to question its efficacy. Faith in little cheap things is quite likely to prove infinitely consoling, but it should not be overstrained. There are liniments which give great relief to cuts and bruises but, if taken internally, bring death."

"I suppose you are prepared to deal with Hope and Charity, but you must keep those lectures for another time. I shall not ask you to enlighten me any further in regard to the people here, I think I know all I want to know about them. The crowd is thinning, and if you will see me to the bottom

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of the stairs, you will be that much nearer to the cakes and ale."

"I shall be that much nearer to the door, and if you are going, the night and a walk through the deserted streets will answer my needs better than food and drink. Before you go, may I say that I was struck by a remark you made a little while ago in regard to pursuit. The instinct to pursue is so strong in dangerous animals that many a hard-pressed man has saved his life by deliberately refusing to run while he accepted the disagreeable alternative of allowing the beast to have its way with him. The chase has attractions for sportsmen, soldiers, and all in whom the hunting instinct is strong. The driven adversary is brought to bay in a position selected by one or other and then the choice of assault or investment depends on circumstances. Some with whom boldness is the only strategy may take the place by sheer effrontery and a *coup de main*, while others prefer the quiet investment, the approach by parallels, the capture of one position after another until the besieged, weakened by long resistance, at last capitulates. Very likely the attack is not all on one side, the defence all on the other. When the struggle has become really serious the weaker sometimes turns the tables by a complete surrender, and then binds the bewildered antagonist in chains and leads him captive to her own stronghold, to render lip-service and eye-service while

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freedom is the cry of his heart and becomes an obsession."

"You speak so feelingly that I might offer you my sympathy, only it is too late or too early to tease you. I spare you the denial, and feel sure you had only the abstract in your mind, not a concrete case. No doubt you also wanted me to realise the application of your advice to 'stand and deliver' to the pursuer, whether he be animal or man. I will think about it whilst I am having my hair brushed, and, if I should want advice—and there is time to seek it—I will consult you. Only I have no great belief in parallels, they never meet. I hope you will have a pleasant walk home and, some day, we might go and see some pictures together—you might take me to the Tate Gallery! Good-night."

*Man and woman  
discussing people they see.*

## THE WIND AND THE WHIRL- WIND

**T**HE great Southern Express which has rushed through the long darkness of a late winter's night is now swinging into the dawn of a Provençal day. As the light obtains full mastery the train rocks along the bank of the Rhone, and wakeful passengers in the warm carriages notice that the surface of the water is blown into jagged wisps without realising what it means. Only two people are really fussing, wrapping up their rugs and getting ready to leave, when the long ugly train of "sleepers" and grey-lined carriages pulls up at a station outside the walls of a mediæval town.

By the time this couple have collected their luggage the train has gone and, as they come out of the desolate station they are met by a bitter mistral, and recognise the full significance of those angry wind-tracks on the waters of the Rhone. They don't yet understand the mistral, but they do realise that this cutting icy blast was hardly what they expected to find here. It does not greatly matter. After a journey of nearly twenty

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hours on wheel and keel, one pines for comforts not to be found in railway-stations or the streets of even the most picturesque and interesting of ancient cities. However chilly the weather conditions, there are warmth and comfort and rest in a homely inn, and the strangers want nothing more, for they are not dependent on outside influences for their happiness.

It matters little or nothing that most of the other sojourners in their hostel are *commis voyageurs*, for the only waiter, Joseph, takes these two under his special protection, while the rest of the establishment, from mine host and his wife to Eglantine the maid and the boy in buttons, cannot do enough for the pretty foreign lady whom they address as Mademoiselle by instinct, and Madame by an effort.

Having once got on terms with Joseph, the time spent in the restaurant is gay. Joseph with his smileless face and white hair, his far too long black trousers hanging in folds over his slippers, his coat and waistcoat black and uncomely, is less interesting sartorially than as a study for a stage waiter. His benign interest in this pair of guests, his manner, rather than his speech, which says: "Of course you are different from these others," is both flattering and touching. And he does smile—on them,—just once when they come in, or when he hands some dish not on the *menu*, and says "*exprès pour madame et monsieur.*" It is only with grave dignity that he produces the wine—a long time after it has been

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ordered—and explains that *le patron* gets it always from the same house—*i.e.*, the same shop a little way up the street. Joseph is exactly the type of hallowed retainer one might hope to find in a mediæval town ; the man who, when he thinks you are worth his attention at all, talks only of the superiority of his master's house, his mistress's zeal for cleanly simplicity, and the *chef's* unrivalled skill. Probably he was born before the present building came into existence and, in all those years of faithful service, he has learned one surprising accomplishment; he never seems to carry anything more than a yard or two without dropping part of the load. Dishes, plates, knives, forks or spoons, cups and saucers or bottles, it is the same with all, some of them must go with a clatter which, if at first alarming to the guests, is the cause of semi-hysterical giggles when constantly repeated. It may be the crash, or it may be the lofty disdain with which Joseph regards the fallen chattels, which fill the spectator with unholy joy ; but certain it is that the daily performance never fails to startle the strangers into a state of hilarity which they find difficult to hide. When Joseph is alone he leaves the offending plates or spoons to lie where their own clumsiness has put them, until he seems to notice them as something for which he is in no way responsible but must make a concession to remove. When the *commis voyageurs*, the tourists, and the travelling priests are many, the boy in buttons does drudge for Joseph. Then the child's

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business is almost entirely confined to picking up the poor feckless things which fall from Joseph's absent-minded grasp. The wonder of it is that nothing is ever broken; which proves how well the kindly hostess deserves the eulogies of her faithful servitor.

Eglantine has no bewildering accomplishment like this, and Joseph probably regards her as little higher than the Buttons, whom he utterly despises, and whose occasional presence he either ignores or resents. But Eglantine is a jewel among handmaidens; comely and warm-hearted, as much "a transcendental lucre" in her department as ever was Mr. Justice Chunder Mookerjee to the Council of India.

It is afternoon when the travellers wander up to the Square and look across the river towards the Castle of St. André, but the pitiless mistral soon drives them home, and when, later, they question Joseph, he tells them that it is winter and the mistral has a way of its own. If it lasts for days, he says, it is really a blessing in disguise, for it blows away so much that is bad and makes the town the healthiest in France. Probably that is true, for only the hardened can survive.

These wanderers are not going to be denied and, as the sun shines on the next day and the next, they visit the Palais des Papes where the *gardien* confides to them that his ancestor came from Cambridge six hundred years ago; on the strength of which fact he can speak three words of English. Then his rival at



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the Musée, Keeper of the famous Provençal paintings and the really excellent Roman glass, prides himself also on his ancestry, guardians in an unbroken line of this storehouse of the arts.

The mistral is still making mare's-tales on the surface of the river ; but there is some shelter in the narrow streets, and every now and then the visitors happen upon a shrine, a doorway, a neglected fountain or a belfry which fills them with delight. The eighty-two churches and the many houses within the walls seem to cover a large area,—as seen from a tower of the Château des Papes,—but, when exercise is a pleasure and companionship is real, the walk to an outer gate with its municipal *octroi* is never long.

The collector of dues is not interested in those who leave the city, and the sight of a real country road invites a quest. Very soon they find that walking is a battle against a most discourteous enemy, taking one unawares round corners, and smiting squarely in the face on bits of straight white road. A group of drummers, pressing flatly against a barrack wall while they practise on their kettle-drums, look so forlorn, so purple with cold, that the wanderers beat a hasty retreat to the shelter of the narrow streets and seek solace in the lace shop beneath the great walls of the Palace of the Popes. And all night long the wind howls, and the green shutters bang out and back

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again, and the mistral works its will; the means justified by the end.

Then a summer's day comes—the icy mistral must have blown itself out in the night—and these two stroll through the great eastern gate, round the walls, up the bank of the river, across the quaking suspension bridge and along the further bank of the Rhone, till, sitting on a stone seat, they can watch the swirling water as it breaks against and around what remains of the ancient bridge. Is it not divine to sit there in the warm sunlight, the water at your feet, the broad expanse of river dancing in the light with that strange broken bridge in the foreground—one-half ever looking for the half that has gone—and behind it the walls and bastions and buildings of that old-world town; while the Castle of the Popes and the Cathedral Church crown the height, the white towers and battlements clear cut against a Provençal sky? That is the “pleasant land of France” they came to see and, if they wanted a reward, it is there. Neither wonders whether they will ever see it again; they are too full of the joy of life to wonder what may come next week, next month, next year. Perhaps in that alone is life kind, that the future, even the to-morrow, is hidden.

They leave the river-side with regret and retrace their steps across the long bridge which trembles and jumps with every passing vehicle, many of them so strange and ancient they might be contemporary

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with the city walls. Outside those walls, wherever there is sunshine and partial shelter, is the favourite playground for the men, the fashionable resort for women, and the paradise of perambulators. Horse-soldiers ride, foot-soldiers lounge and every one seems keenly interested in preparations for a colossal fair and carnival. Our friends determine that they will not wait for these festivities, but in the time that remains to them they explore, wherever there seems promise of reward, and find much satisfaction under the courtly guidance of the *gardien* of the Chartreuse Monastery and his *collègue* of Fort St. André.

So it happens that when at last they leave a place hallowed to them by delicious memories—with only a background of palace and river and ancient walls—the sky is leaden and weeping, and the streets are swimming with the result of hours and hours of rain. When the moment of departure comes, Joseph refuses to be moved to the faintest smile by the suggestion that rain is also a great cleanser of cities, and Eglantine is fain to weep.

It is evening when, after a journey long in time but comparatively short in distance, the comrades reach another stage in their pilgrimage. The rain has been with them all the way, and there is mistral here also, but much less violent and not so icy, for the snow-clad hills from which it comes are miles further away. The friends have exchanged the homely inn

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for a far more imposing and better appointed residence, but, whatever the advantages of the change, they realise their loss in the personnel of the establishment. They take no account of Care who sits so close beside them, for they have never yet been conscious of his presence ; they only notice the mitigated mistral and the ubiquitous *commis voyageur* with his unmistakable luggage. But Care is there, invisible because of his exceeding blackness.

Oh what a morning ! what sunshine ! what a sky ! And yet this is no summer, for here also the people are clad in the garb of winter, the cat-skin and dog-skin, and goat-skin and hyena-skin : indeed so strange are these garments both in shape and material, that our travellers fancy the creatures who originally wore these hairy coats of many colours must have belonged to some other planet. They cannot help noticing this apparently trivial detail, for in the life of this place, the life of to-day, the streets and houses of this and the last few generations of people, there is nothing else to attract attention though much to repel it. As they walk through the main thoroughfares of the town and glance at the things selected to attract the eye, they are amazed at the absence of taste, the sins against beauty, the positive hideousness of practically every single article, designed, woven, coloured, shaped, or even arranged, to produce a pleasing effect. They agree that no country town, no village in their own

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country has ever, in this sense, jarred their feelings so deeply as this famous town of Southern France. It is not only the shop windows; everything that is modern in the town offends, and no one who has not seen the country girl in her grotesque finery would ever believe that she is daughter of the nation whose decree, in all questions of the adornment of women, enslaves the Western world. Strangest of all, this place possesses some of the most splendid monuments of man's handiwork to be found in Europe; structures so simple yet magnificent, so perfect in form and line and proportion, so grandly fashioned, that they fill the spectator with an almost holy joy, and no less admiration for the people whose work seems, in its changeless wonder, to challenge Nature herself. One has not to seek these monuments of Roman genius and grandeur, the wonderful amphitheatre and the perfect temple are in the heart of the town; but a few minutes' walk brings you to the Baths and Temple of Diana, while the Watch-tower, le Tour Magne, crowns the hill above the Baths and commands from its summit miles and miles of country in every direction.

It is there that our friends go first, wandering through the old-fashioned French garden, then up the steep hill of pine woods to the sun-lit tower. A short climb up the spiral staircase and they stand alone on the summit, with all that glorious prospect before them. They are not conscious—or only one of them

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knows vaguely—that their joy comes from each other, and their feeling of supreme content is no more induced by what they see than are the colours of a picture by light. Their joy is of themselves, but it is glorified by the environment.

Perfect companionship is not garrulous, and few words are spoken as they stand close together leaning over the wall with their eyes on the landscape. Then back through the wood and down the hill to watch the water rushing between the carved pillars of the Baths and along the balustraded channel which gives to the people of the town the water-supply provided by the Romans nearly nineteen centuries ago. Strolling homewards they come to the *Maison Carrée*, and if the proportions were not so beautiful, the work so massive, and the carving so perfect that the contrast with surrounding buildings is almost too *bizarre*, they could hardly believe that this building in the marvel of its preservation, also dates from the early years of the Christian Era. It is, however, in les Arènes that these two spend most of their time in the days that follow ; days in some of which the mistral seems to have really forgotten its mission. To approach the impressive dignity of the amphitheatre and appreciate the beauty of the curving walls, and then to go inside and be left alone to wander about the great stone galleries, or sit in the sun on one of the many rows of stone seats and absorb the profound immensity

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of the arena enclosed by that ellipse of ever-rising tiers of stone, has a fascination which cannot be conveyed in words, but to them is just a part of the place. Their chiefest pleasure is to climb to the very topmost line of seats and look out over the dwarf wall to the country beyond. Then turning, to sit at that seemingly dizzy height and look into the arena, across the space, in every direction, with nothing to bar the view, just the curving tiers of stone, with occasional broad, level terraces, and last, the arena where men, not beasts, fought in the brave days of old.

They tried to people the place, to imagine the sea of faces, the kaleidoscope of carpets and coloured robes shutting out the stone benches ; the procession of the combatants, the deadly encounters, the excitement and the din,—possibly hushed for a moment as the bodies of the slain were dragged out through the low portal at the Western end of the arena. Here they spent time which had no measure for them ; basking in the sunshine, sheltered alike from mistral and from the life of the town, and they said it was very good indeed. Just those two the world forgetting, with no thought of the morrow beyond the vague feeling that all the to-morrows must be like this, only better in that they would reflect their own more perfect knowledge.

This absolute intimacy, the community of sight and speech, the sharing of every moment, with no outside interest, no other being to distract thought or attention,

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is a strange and wonderful thing. The real inwardness and intensity of such a communion comes afterwards, perhaps is only realised when gone beyond recall.

Then there was a day to le Pont du Gard, when comfortably nestled in an open motor, silent and swift, they sped over the sunlit roads between carefully cultivated fields and through quaint old villages till, at last, a sharp turn brought them suddenly to the bank of a river spanned by that stupendous aqueduct. Scrambling up one steep side of the narrow valley they gained the topmost storey of the structure, the narrow stone conduit which once carried a stream of water across the wide valley. They walked through the water-worn channel, from bank to bank, stopping to gaze from that great height at the wide expanse of hill and vale and distant towns clustered round some high-placed castle, with spires and belfries of Church or Monastery etched against the sky. To stand there, with the river far below, brings home the amazing work of those ancient builders; their conception of great works and their power to defy time; but the wonderful beauty of those tiers of arches rising from the water to support the narrow conduit is only seen from below. The Romans knew how to raise the enduring monument of utility, and to combine with that object a beauty and simplicity for which one seeks vainly in modern structures. The Pont du Gard impresses the spectator with wonder at and joy in its



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perfect proportions, and also—as these two thought—with a sadness difficult to define or explain. But an hour of racing through the winter air against a setting sun drives away sadness, when all you want is what you have.

When there was nothing left to be seen, nothing with which they were not already familiar by reason of daily visits, they packed themselves and their belongings into the motor and, almost hidden under a heap of luggage, set their faces south and, steering crookedly across country reached, after a long journey, the banks of the Rhone, crossed the river and entered a town where every street and almost every building seemed reminiscent of days and people and events long departed and forgotten. Here at last they revelled in warmth as well as sunshine. Here were forum and amphitheatre, ancient walls and palaces, cathedrals and monasteries and still more ancient tombs. Here indeed was the home of the Provençal poet, and here also was the illusion he did so much to create. The friends made merry over the apocryphal beauty of the Arlesiennes, in all the bravery of their national costume, and they decided that having seen these ladies in gala costume on a fête day, the spectacle was not worth the proverbial candle. But the town, its buildings and its treasures are worth all the time and attention that a traveller can give them. If the accommodation is indifferent that only adds zest to a sojourn

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*à deux*, and the attraction of the many ancient monuments which lie within a short radius of the forum is only equalled by the beauty and historic interest of places beyond the walls, but still within easy reach ; such for instance as the monastery at Mont Major and the castle of Les Beaux, where, in the days of the Crusades, the Princes of Provence held a Court of Love. All the joys of sight and sympathy, of mutual tastes and community of feeling, they absorbed as one in thought and appreciation. Filled with the bliss or understanding and aloneness, every hour and every incident welded firmer the chain of love. All else seemed to them but background ; pleasant or interesting, ugly or disagreeable, nothing seemed to really matter. They were together and were content ; Provence was a dream and the only reality the passage of Time which said at last, "this sweet society must end."

*Return*

When the day came on which it was necessary to begin the return journey, they had the supreme satisfaction of feeling that never had the smallest cloud flecked the sky of even one of those halcyon days and nights. All were unforgettable, the last more perfect than the first. That knowledge was common to both, but only the man realised the heights to which an unheard-of fortune had carried them. The miracle was lost on her, she did not know ; she was unused to analysis and introspection ;

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and, though she had shared every joy to the full and been as deeply thrilled, her ignorance took rather for granted the perfection of communion, which he recognised as beyond the power of imagination. But in all these days they had spoken with one voice, and in their passion and their love neither had given the faintest sign, by word or deed, that there existed the remotest difference in the quality of feeling for the other. On the contrary, so far as it was possible to assert love and to prove it, neither had ever felt a moment's doubt and both were absolutely content; believing that they had found the well of earthly happiness, that it was inexhaustible, and that it was theirs alone. At any rate this thought was constant in his mind, and when he put it in words, as he often did, she repeated them, with the conviction of the moment, though it is unlikely that she thought at all.

They were there, it was very good indeed; she wanted nothing, and there was no other creature to distract attention—then why think at all? So he felt, and thought ceaselessly of the wonder of this amazing happiness; and she felt, without thought of past or future, or even of the swiftly passing hours.

Then the day of return came and, to fulfil a wish and fit in their time, they journeyed north to see a wonderful Roman theatre and a splendid Roman gateway. As it was necessary to get to a main station to pick up a fast night train they arranged to dine

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once more in the hostelry which had first received them. Something was going on there, probably the fair, for which they had seen such elaborate preparations being made in the early days of their holiday ; but though their inn was crammed with people, the host and his wife and Eglantine were in the hall, and when the travellers appeared they were effusively welcomed, and Eglantine carried off her lady while the man sought out the surprised and delighted Joseph, who lavished upon the couple all the resources of his department, and expressed his keen disappointment when the time came for the final departure.

Then the station, the struggle for seats in a full train, the same rushing through the night—only this time north instead of south—and when dawn broke on the frozen windows the travellers saw that the whole country outside Paris was in the grip of a hard white frost. Dull skies, a dull and most uneasy sea, another crowded train, a struggle for baggage, a shake of the hand and the man was alone.

Exactly a week passed, a week during which the man made more than one unsuccessful attempt to see his late companion, and then he received a note telling him she was just starting for Petersburg with a party of friends. He thought it strange, but he was busy, and as she had gone already he could only wait. He had told her that he would send her something to remind her of their wonderful journey ; and, when

## THE WIND AND WHIRLWIND

he could find the time, he busied himself with the quest of what he thought would give her pleasure, and having succeeded sent his gift ; but though the time named for her return had passed he heard nothing. He had not long to wait, for after another couple of days he received a letter, telling him that she had married a man whom she had known only for a few months, and for whom, until a week ago, she never had a feeling but that of pique. The suddenness of the blow staggered him less than the circumstances under which it was delivered. Every incident of that so recent journey came back to haunt and madden him, and the moment chosen to impart this all-but-impossible knowledge was one when he was to have met her, and must still keep to the arrangement ; but now he would be alone with all the time his own to try to read a riddle to which there seemed to be no intelligible solution. Before he left to keep his solitary tryst she asked to see him, but when she came, she only wept and said she could not understand herself. There was not time to put a tithe of the questions that he had meant to ask, but only two seemed to matter : had she only lied through all the weeks and months of their friendship, or was she mad now ? To the first she gave an indignant denial, and to the second made a confused attempt to explain what seemed inexplicable. The shock of her letter, the anticipation of her visit, and all the mingled

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feelings awakened by actually seeing her, and by the vain attempt to understand her action, had prevented him from fully realising the real significance of what had happened. Once alone, in that haven of ancient peace where he had hoped to meet her, the magnitude of his loss filled him with a hopeless despair which seemed to paralyse all feeling but that of pain. In those days of solitude, as he tried to piece the puzzle together and recalled every incident of the past months and years, there came to him flashes of light revealing the grim irony of the facts. He knew that his safety lay there, and would come in the day when his sense of humour enabled him to triumph over his own suffering and her unimaginable treachery. In the bitterness of his lonely introspection that day seemed so remote that he felt the chill of the mistral had entered his bones; and wherever he went, whatever he did, he must be haunted by the Provençal dream and the torture of his awakening.

Man and a woman get off train. Go  
on own, good place. Leave go  
bedroom, narrow street, mistral  
cold, look at sea, building, trees,  
52 return to own part, she moving  
narrow, he is broken  
memories haunt him.

## SOME PROVERBS

EVERY one who thinks of what they say, either before or after they say it, must have been struck by the topsy-turveydom of certain popular sayings which have been repeated for ages with a childlike belief in their wisdom and truth. As a boy at school, on the afternoon of the week devoted to the study of the Greek Testament, I remember how a great scholar (who was popularly supposed to have worn out two Liddell and Scott dictionaries), explained to the boys of his form that the oft-quoted words "he who runs may read," which have no intelligible meaning, were merely the result of a mistranslation, the true rendering being "he who reads may run." Having read the good news himself, he runs to tell every one else.

A similar inversion of words resulting in a similar misunderstanding, or in a perversion of wisdom, is found in some proverbial sayings. If this concentrated lore of the ancients has been accepted and repeated by generations, one would suppose that it will stand any test, yet what is further from the truth than to say

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"out of the fulness of the heart the mouth speaketh." When the *heart* is full the mouth is speechless; but when the belly is full, the owner, like Petrarch, "is so pleased at finding he can express his thoughts in words, that he often goes on talking when he has nothing more to say."

We are told that "opportunity makes the thief." A poor, weak thief this, who says, "I am an honest man, but there is no one looking, so I will be a thief." That is the sort of thief for whom ladies go into hysterics when, sitting in the stalls, they see the neurotic stage thief put his benefactor's £50 note in his pocket, and then go through the mental agonies of a criminal trial and the physical unpleasantness of imprisonment, from both of which he ought, of course, to be safe. There are in this country so many kind-hearted, simple-minded people who think it wrong to punish a man for stealing property which does not happen to be theirs, that it must be difficult to maintain any really effective prison discipline. English juries are not of that type, fortunately. They have still primitive notions of *meum* and *tuum* and give verdicts accordingly. Not here, but elsewhere in the Empire, I was present in court when a trusted public servant was charged with the embezzlement of public funds entrusted to his care. He was tried and, though the evidence against him was perfectly clear, the jury disagreed. In the interval, before he was retried, the prisoner wrote



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two letters admitting his guilt, and these were produced at the second trial. On that occasion, however, the prisoner's advocate reminded the jury that his client was married and had a family, also that he was lame, and the advocate wound up a very long and at times impassioned harangue in somewhat these words : " My client is no thief. What did he do ? He *borrowed* some money from the Government, meaning, of course, to replace it. But he is a married man with a family, he is lame, he walks with crutches, and, before he could replace the money, the Government sent an officer to examine his safe and his balance. Of course, the money was not there. Now, gentlemen of the jury, every one of you is employed by some one ; most of you are entrusted with money belonging to your employers. If some day you should be pressed, and you also borrowed a little money from your employers—meaning, of course, to replace it—are you to be branded as thieves and cast into prison ? Think of the necessities of the accused, of those depending on him ; think of the miserable stipend which he received from the Government which now pursues him with such vindictive ferocity, and remember that, if you convict my client to-day, you need not hope for mercy if ever you stand in his place."

The jury, without leaving the box, returned a verdict of " Not guilty," and the judge, addressing the prisoner, said : " Prisoner at the bar, I can only repeat

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to you what has been said before from the Bench : you have declared yourself to be a thief, but the jury find you to be a liar. You are therefore discharged." This postmaster was a typical "poor fellow" of the modern play ; but when a playwright desires to appeal to the feelings of a London theatre audience it is usual to say a good deal about the neurotic temperament of the victim of circumstances. That is the coloured picture ; uncoloured, the character is simply weak, and the theft, or other temptation to which the victim yields, is the result of weakness. It may be said that there are opportunity-made thieves, but as opportunities are countless and cannot be removed, I hold that the fall is less the result of opportunity than of inclination—in other words, of weakness of character. Moreover, it is a sign of the weak backslider that, when caught, he always whines and tries to make out that it was any one's fault but his own. A real thief will make the opportunity ; he will not wait for it. He would laugh at the idea. The man who sets out of determined purpose to "crack a crib" or to relieve the Chief Constable of his watch at a local race meeting, is not the slave of opportunity but the master of it.

There are other forms of theft where the successful thief may carry away no booty. Here also the robber is not the victim of circumstances but the designer of a carefully thought out and skilfully managed plot ;

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“She went about soliciting his eyes,  
Through which she knew the Robber unaware  
Steals in, and takes the bosom by surprise.”

And when the day came no doubt he thought, “Thrice-blessed opportunity which made me thief.” But he was wrong; he was not even the thief. Manlike, he was too vain to realise that he was not a free agent but a hypnotised medium.

We are taught that “pride goes before a fall”; but surely pride, pride in oneself, goes after the fall. If it were argued that pride goes the moment we have decided to take the step which must lead to the fall, is not the reply that the moment of that decision is the actual fall? And is it not when the step has been taken, when the unhappy person who deliberately sought the gutter finds himself lying there, shaken and besmirched, is it not *then* that he realises that he can never again have the same pride and confidence in his own ability to traverse safely and with dignity the most slippery places? If the saying could ever have been intended to apply to a literal and accidental fall—an almost impossible assumption—nothing would go before the fall, but with it the loss would be of cuticle rather than of pride.

It has been written and often repeated that “poverty makes strange bed-fellows.” Why poverty? Is it not possible that wealth makes stranger bed-fellows still?

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At any rate there are more recorded instances of the latter than the former. Certainly I know an instance where a very poor old woman was reputed to have had experience of a strange bed-fellow, and it was in this wise. Travelling in a very remote, wild and jungly part of the Malay Peninsula, I had to pass a night in a clearing with only two or three tiny huts in it. One or two of the villagers wandered in to see me in the course of the evening and they pointed out a hut, on the edge of the forest, which was inhabited by an old couple, a fisherman and his wife. Some months before, they said, one very cold and stormy night, the old man got up about midnight, without disturbing his wife, and went out to look after his fishing. The hut consisted of one room (on the floor of which the old couple slept on a mat) and a little open verandah, with a door from the room to the verandah and a ladder of three or four steps from the verandah to the ground. The narrator of the incident said that the wind blew the door open, but the old woman was too sleepy to shut it, and after some time, but sooner than she expected, she heard her husband return and both heard and felt him lie down beside her. She took no notice, for the storm would explain anything, and immediately resumed her peaceful slumber. Just in the grey of the false dawn she was aroused by her companion getting up and making for the door. Then she turned her head and to her amazement saw a large tiger spring

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from the verandah to the ground. The husband returned some time later and said he had been busy with his fishing ever since he left the hut. My callers evidently regarded it as a very amusing story, every word of which they sincerely believed, and, as I had no means of verifying it, I left it at that.

In the early morning, as I started again on my journey, some one pointed out the old lady to me and I felt sure the tiger must have sought the protection of that hut simply because of the wildness of the night. It was very dark, of course, but still, tigers can see in the dark.

This is a more or less authentic instance of poverty making a strange bed-fellow, but somehow I do not think a case like this was in the experience of the writer of the words. If, therefore, the saying is to be taken at all literally I must continue to believe that the case for wealth making strange bed-fellows is at least as strong as that for poverty.

There are two familiar saws, "absence makes the heart grow fonder," and "out of sight out of mind," which may fairly be left to settle between themselves which is the most worthy of belief. At first sight it does not seem as though both could be true, and yet that would be a safer conclusion than to accept one wholly and discard the other absolutely. Perhaps they are meant for different ages of man and woman, just as our tastes and beliefs vary at different stages of our

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lives. People from twenty to thirty years of age usually believe that absence makes the heart grow fonder, but some as young as that, and many who are older, are convinced that few facts are more dismally certain than this one, "out of sight, out of mind."

"God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb." I wonder how many people would say that has been the result of their experience of the world. Without cynicism does it not rather seem that the newly-shorn lamb gets more than his or her share of the wind—from inexperience in the art of seeking shelter—and at any rate feels the breeze more keenly by reason of insufficient clothing? When any particular lamb is manifestly better sheltered, does not that depend on the lamb and not on the direction or strength of the wind?

I have instanced some proverbial sayings which appear to imply fallacies. There are many others, like "least said soonest mended," that propound truths somewhat like "bad harvest, little bread" or "no gum, won't stick," but there is one the force of which is not so obvious, namely, "whatever is, is for the best." At first sight this seems to be a dictum more difficult to accept than almost any other, and yet, give it time and how often it proves not only its own value but your lack of prescience to realise what would in the end prove to be for your greater advantage and happiness. Of course it is not always right; every one believes that at some time in their lives they made

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one or more gigantic blunders, the burden of which must be borne perhaps to the grave. But if men and women—not boys and girls—are only fair, how often has something happened which, at the time, was regarded as the climax of disaster ; but later, even many years later, they felt was only a blessing in disguise. And in many lives this does not happen once or twice, but often, and each time the sufferer says, “if only I could have won that prize, if only I could have avoided that calamity, all would have been well.” }

How often is this creed repeated, year in and year out, until there comes in sight a greater prize, or that seeming disaster turns out sheer gain and all regrets are forgotten. The result cannot always be good, the slings and arrows of fortune are likely to find joints in any armour, but the wearer must do something in his own behoof, for bad luck is frequently only a synonym for incapacity. Most men and women will admit that things which they regarded as calamities, when they happened, now seem to have been positive advantages ; the curious fact is that though, if questioned, they answer in that sense, they have never before thought about the matter in the light of cause and effect, in the true meaning of the words “whatever is, is for the best.”





## COINCIDENCES

**S**TRANGE coincidences are full of attraction. They possess the fascination of a good ghost story without any appeal to the supernatural. They are the simple accidents of circumstance, and yet, as coincidences, they are often more curious than the most elaborate efforts of imagination, or the most "authentic" accounts of those personal experiences which, if correctly told, do not seem to admit of any rational explanation.

Every one has listened to accounts of such experiences, and the judicially-minded often feel that there are weak points in the tale, but they hesitate to press home a cross-examination which invariably annoys the tale-teller, for it seems to throw doubt upon his veracity, or intelligence, or both. That is not the case with a coincidence, however remarkable ; for any observant and accurate person should be able to convince his audience in regard to what he has seen or heard himself. One cannot guarantee the truth of a coincidence told at second hand, one can only state one's own belief in it. The whole interest of a coincidence depends upon

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accuracy of observation, memory and repetition, and that is why I prefer to tell of what has come within my own knowledge. A wise father may know his own son, but he would not be wise to dogmatise about the parentage of an adopted child. In telling another man's story, it is not only impossible to vouch for the facts, but it is necessary to repeat what you heard without alteration or addition. I shall bear that in mind when I come to an experience other than my own.

Once upon a time—before the invention of increment values and super taxes—I lived, for a while, in a remote part of North Wales and, while there, I read in a newspaper of the death of the wife of a very old acquaintance of mine. I was distressed on his account ; also because she was the kindest and best of women, and I had known her as long as her husband. Therefore I wrote him a letter expressing my regret and sympathy, I addressed it to a place where I thought it would reach him—many thousands of miles away right across the world—and I posted it.

I set out to be accurate and therefore I must confess, to my shame, that I never once thought of this letter or anything to do with it until—well that is the story.

Months passed ; autumn gave place to winter, and winter to spring ; I had journeyed far and journeyed near ; hunted and shot and visited, been busy about

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many things, and I was back in the house in North Wales. One morning as I was dressing—to be exact I was lacing my boots—suddenly, in the middle of a different train of thought, the letter flashed across my mind. The suggestion just seemed to say what a very strange thing it was that I never received any answer. My friend's punctiliousness, his calling, the terms in which I had written, to say nothing of the occasion and the fact that, though we had been on the best terms for years, letters but rarely passed between us—all these things trickled through my brain insisting "It is six months since you wrote, why has he sent no reply?" Something also said, "Why have you not thought of it before?"

By that time I had finished dressing and went down to breakfast. I am an unpunctual person when I am alone, but I knew that the letters usually came about breakfast time. A moment later, a servant brought in the bag (I was four miles from a very remote railway station) and when I opened it, the first letter I noticed was one with a foreign stamp and postmarks, the answer to my letter of condolence.

There was no explanation of the long delay between the receipt of my letter and the posting of the reply—for it was the reply, though it made no other reference either to my condolences or to other matters of which I had written. It referred mainly to the writer's arrangements for an early return to England.

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When the question of my unanswered letter first entered my mind the postman, carrying the bag, must have been three or four hundred yards from the house, and all I wish to insist upon is that from the day I wrote till that moment I had never once thought of my letter or of anything to do with it.

Jones is dead, and Brown is dead, so they cannot contradict me, but if they had been alive they would not have minded my telling their connection with a rather curious coincidence. The few surviving Browns and Joneses are not related to my departed friends ; they were orphans, and the ground is clear. If others take exception to the facts, that only helps to prove that half the world does not know how the other half lives, and if one half says "we don't want to know," that attitude of mind would amuse the other half, and perhaps suggest that their neighbours suffered from defective vision. I must make this apparent excuse because—let me say it again—the real point of a coincidence is that it actually happened and that the details are exact.

Jones dined with Brown one night, at the latter's Club in London, and, after dinner, they went to a play. Brown had seen a good deal more of the world than Jones, while Jones knew the backwoods and their strenuous life better than the abodes of ease and idleness. Both men could take care of themselves without the help of the Police.

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The play was dull, as plays are sometimes, and, when it was over, Brown insisted upon taking the somewhat reluctant Jones to supper at one of the places where men and women sup. Here they were less bored, just because the thing was real, and it seemed interesting to watch a game where they were, perhaps, the only spectators. A girl, or a woman, was sitting at the next table with three men. She had her back to what I may call the audience, and especially to Jones, who faced the other way. Presently, however, Brown discovered that he knew the lady, and he imparted that information to his friend. Jones became mildly interested in his neighbour and, by the help of some rather obvious contortions of his head and body he managed to see enough of the lady's face to satisfy him that she was quite young, perhaps twenty, and uncommonly good to look at. Later on, when most of the people were leaving the restaurant—mainly because the lights were being put out—and Brown was taking that opportunity to say half a dozen words to the girl, Jones counted up her attractions, and noted a good figure and a face with considerable character as two of them.

When the friends reached the street and were walking homewards, Brown told Jones that he had arranged to call upon the lady the next afternoon and intended to take Jones with him. Jones was married, Brown was not, but having nothing particular

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to do the former accepted the proposal without much hesitation. He was married, but knew that he could not congratulate himself on the fact; moreover, though his mind was filled with endless doubts, doubts more disturbing than any certainty, of exact knowledge he had none.

The next day the call was made; Jones was duly introduced and, when he thought he had been there long enough, he made his excuses and left. Jones had no illusions in regard to his friend's friend, there was not room for any, and when, some months later, Brown came to him to say that he was going to the Antipodes, and asked him to look after the lady during his absence and see that she wanted for nothing in reason, Jones undertook the charge as an act of friendship. It was a stewardship which cost him nothing but a rare visit of inquiry, a few rather businesslike letters and a very occasional dinner at a restaurant with a girl whose beauty drew on her the eyes of most of the other men and women present.

Then Brown died, somewhat suddenly, in Patagonia or the Pacific Islands, and Jones, who had also been absent about his own business, returned to England, intent upon obtaining a divorce for which he had proof enough to convict Caesar's wife. He had little time or inclination to concern himself with other people's affairs, but he could not refuse, and never

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thought of refusing, to do what was possible to help Brown's friend in her distress. It did not mean very much, and whatever it was, whether in advice or more material help, he was glad to give it. Then it ended ; she left her rooms, and he devoted himself to his own concerns, which to him were all-important. Such matters—all legal matters which cannot be disposed of summarily—travel exceeding slowly, and it was months, or more probably years, before Jones's legal advisers got his case actually going. It never went any further than that ; it died almost before it had an existence ; for Jones found that he was met by a cross action and himself charged with misconduct *vis-à-vis* the lady entrusted to his care by Brown.

I am telling this story as I heard it from the lips of Jones, but there is no use labouring the points of the case or I shall never get to the coincidence, which has but a shadowy connection with all this apparently irrelevant matter. Jones's position was hopeless ; it all seemed as plain and simple as falling off a log. He had been to the pretty lady's house, which did not happen to be in a fashionable West-end street ; he had taken her out ; for months he had actually supplied her with means, and he had met her and been introduced to her in a way that would give Counsel every opportunity of proclaiming their own burning moral convictions while they held him up to public obliquy.

He could imagine the impression that the testimony

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of paid informers and paid servants, dexterously handled by Counsel paid to plead their client's cause, would have upon the minds of jurymen, with whom appearances count for much, and of a Judge whose own knowledge of life and rules of conduct would convince him that it would be outrageous, say, for a man and a girl, who were nothing to each other, to pass hours together, alone, in a boat on the river. And in face of all the damning appearances what defence could he make? A conventional denial, as confidently expected as certainly disbelieved. And she, his accomplice? Well, it did not matter what she said; she would be described as a person of bad character whose testimony on any matter, and especially on this one, could only be regarded with grave suspicion. Possibly there was one way out of this *impasse*, and that was to drag in the name of his dead friend, who would not be able to deny the story. That course he dismissed as unthinkable, and his only comfort was the belief that he was denied any choice in the matter. He was spared all trouble as to whether this evil or that was the less objectionable. He had sacrificed everything he held dear for this one object—his freedom; he had given his career, his whole time and intelligence, his very life to it, and this was the useless, stupid, untidy, resultless end.

Jones took it badly because, according to his code, he kept his own affairs to himself, and, as he refused to



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make any one his confidant and felt that if you have a grievance the last thing to do with it is to pass it on to your friends, he went out into the street, the street full of strangers, to see if he could find any distraction. The street, at night, included the Music-Halls, and into one of these he wandered. Standing against a barrier, in the place where men walk and smoke and women walk without smoking, he looked gloomily at the passers-by and wondered how many years had gone since he was last in that same place. The crowd passed unheeded, the same people walking backwards and forwards, while some went and many new-comers were added to the throng. The stage behind him was more unheeded still; he did not even look at it or know whether it was occupied by dancing dogs or ballet girls. Then he caught sight of a new face, one which attracted him, mainly because it seemed so unlike the hundreds of others by which it was surrounded. As the owner passed again he looked rather hard at her and she stopped near him. He spoke to her, asked what she was doing there, and presently found himself driving with her to some address which she had given to the cabman. Beyond the fact that it seemed a long way, in a south-westerly direction, he took no notice till, finally, the cab stopped opposite a door in a street which seemed to recall some vague memory. When they had been admitted and entered a sitting-room, he recognised with a shock that it was

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the very room where, long ago, he had been taken by Brown and introduced to the innocent source of all his trouble. This discovery upset all his ideas of distraction, and his one thought was to get back to the street, to solitude and the night, as soon as he conveniently could. To avoid a very abrupt departure, to gratify his rather angry curiosity, and to make conversation, he asked his companion whether she had lived there for long. The reply involved *toute une histoire* which he thought, under other circumstances, might have interested him, but he only noticed the very trivial fact that she harped on the superior advantages of her previous residence, 10 Shevelstone Crescent, where, as she said, she lived when she first came to London. When he left the house, "10 Shevelstone Crescent" buzzed in his ears till he reached the shelter of a friendly hansom. Once there, and the horse set going, he imagined that his feelings must resemble those of the startled burglar who has just got safely off the premises.

Less than a week later Jones was walking in Regent Street, simply because it was a fine morning, and he thought he would have a stroll before luncheon. He had done a certain amount of strolling, and was looking into a shop window when he became conscious that a pretty and smartly-dressed girl was standing close to him engaged in the same elevating occupation. Jones realised that if he ventured to speak to this girl she

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would not scream, so he said something banal, and she replied with a rather engaging foreign accent, which made him ask her nationality. She said she was a Dane and, in reply to further questions, told him that she had run away from home with a lover who had deserted her. Jones was moved by this tale—and no doubt, also, by the girl's good looks—and asked where she lived, but her efforts to pronounce the English words failed to make Jones any the wiser. Suddenly, with a little cry of delight, she fished a card out of a tiny bag, and held it up triumphantly for Jones to read. He did so. There was a foreign-looking name which conveyed nothing to him ; but in the lower left hand corner he read :

“ 10 Shevelstone Crescent, S.W.”

It is strange that a man should forget his food, but in that moment Jones remembered that, even if he hurried, he must be late for luncheon.

What is attractive about coincidences is their variety. People seem never to tire of ghost stories, and if you have a pretty imagination you can improvise them as you go along, and the audience will still be thirsty when your tap is dry. And yet there is a family likeness about ghost stories, and I feel convinced that a book of them would be unendurable.

The coincidence I am now going to describe is

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given on the authority of my friend Grant. He is alive and well and will remain so, I trust, for many years to come. He told me the story while I was staying with him and the details were quite fresh in his memory. I am certain they are exact and, if there is nothing thrilling in the facts, I can say as a diligent observer that the thrill of a coincidence—if thrill be the right word—is often in its quaintness.

Men who have lived most of their lives on the back blocks of great undeveloped continents are generally children in their ignorance of, and curiosity as to, ways of life in the capitals of Europe. Grant was like that ; a plain man whose intelligence had been given to hard work in places where life, as lived in Paris or London, was as remote as Mars. Grant had not worked in vain ; he had succeeded, whilst still in the very prime of life, and he had taken an excellent shooting in a south-western country, about six hours by rail from Paddington. Pleasure took him occasionally to London, and then he stayed at a club ; but business sometimes called him to a very distant land entailing a sea voyage of nearly five weeks. When I saw him he had lately returned from one of these voyages, and he told me that, at a port about a week's journey from Marseilles, two girls joined the ship, and immediately attracted the attention of himself and the other passengers by reason of their good looks, by the absence of chaperone, and by the lurid fact that the ship's

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curiosity, which is usually keen and insistent, could not discover who or what they were. Grant, like the rest of the men, made the acquaintance of the new arrivals, talked to them, danced with them, and, as regards one of them, did his best to find out who and what she was. He failed pitifully. She told him that she lived in London and had been spending a holiday abroad, but when he asked if he might call upon her, when they both reached London, she replied that she never gave her address to casual acquaintances. Grant must have attracted some attention himself, for he spent his money as freely as one can on board ship, went in for everything, and won as much as his skill and phenomenal good luck could give him. Before reaching Marseilles the lady relented, or was surprised into naming the street where she lived (which happened to be very near to Grant's club), and, on further pressure, gave her number and said she would be glad to see him if he would come to tea some afternoon. It is a material fact that a certain man—who either came on board with the girls or was there already—made himself noticeable by his attentions to them.

When Grant reached London, and had leisure to think of frivolities, he made his way to the address given him, and, to his great surprise, found that it was a massage establishment; his acquaintance was the lady director and lived in pleasant rooms above her work. This, he gathered, was the reason for her

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reserve, and, having a wide knowledge of ship life, Grant felt that she was probably wise. Having seen the lady in her own home his interest in her was revived and increased, and when he proposed to take her to dinner and a play, he was gratified that she readily accepted. In due time she fulfilled the engagement, and, when the performance was over, he thought it his duty to escort her to her home. She asked him to come in and he went.

In the "Lays of Ind" there is a story—I suppose I ought to call it a poem ; it may be an Anglo-Indian legend—which I have not read since my youth, but I think every stanza ends with the words :

"For Grant was a terrible ass."

Of course, that was not my Grant ; but I said he was a simple-minded man, with almost the same views of some common phases of life as some Divorce Court judges—almost, but not quite. I don't know what he expected ; I did not ask him. Perhaps he forgot how late it was and stayed too long talking, for he talks well. Anyhow, he was greatly surprised when the lady told him she was going to be married, the next morning, to the young man who had been so attentive to her on board ship.

Grant went back to his club with a doubt in his mind and a desire to solve that doubt as great as it seemed unattainable.

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On the placid life of the back-block man this incident made an impression out of all proportion to its trifling importance. It still filled a large portion of his thoughts when, a few days later, he went to Paddington Station, found his train, and put his things on a seat of the only first-class carriage by which he could travel for three-quarters of his journey without a change. There was another compartment, but that was for smokers and this one was empty ; so he went away quite happy to buy newspapers and a luncheon basket and returned, just as the train was going to start, to find another passenger in his compartment—a lady to wit. There was no time to do anything but get in, and, as the train started, Grant remembered that it would not stop for three hours !

If Grant's experiences had hitherto been rather limited, they seemed to be making up for lost time now. No one had ever accused him of shyness, so, having glanced at his fellow passenger, and seen that she was young and intelligent-looking with a certain twinkle in her eye, he said : "The train will not stop for three hours, I earnestly hope that you do not object to smoking, for, though I am a smoker, I never travel in a smoking carriage because I hate the smell of other men's tobacco."

"Oh, no," she said, "I don't mind at all. I smoke myself."

That was comforting, at any rate ; and, the ice

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being broken, Grant produced his luncheon, invited the stranger to share it; and, in the course of conversation, ascertained that she was going to stay at the junction where he would leave the main line for a further journey. In three hours you can do a deal of talking and, apropos of some remark of his, she said: "How casual men are, they even start upon a long journey without money enough to take them home again."

Asked if that was merely a general accusation which might be questioned, she replied: "Nothing of the kind! Only a few days ago I was walking in Paris and suddenly in the street I met a man I know, who had landed only lately at Marseilles; he had got as far as Paris and, having spent all his money, asked me to lend him £10 to take him to London."

The moment she spoke of a man who had landed at Marseilles Grant, whose mind was, no doubt unconsciously, full of that unsolved doubt, had an inspiration, and he said:

"I think I know the man you mean. Had he landed from the *Candia*?"

"Yes," she said, "but how do you know that?"

"Because," said Grant, "I also travelled by the *Candia*; and if you know——(naming the man) you also know Miss—— whom he has just married."

"Yes, I do know her, quite well; but I did not



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know she had married Mr.——. How amusing!” and she laughed.

Before the train reached the junction Grant thought he knew all he wished. The final and solitary stage of his journey gave him ample time for the indulgence of very mixed speculations; but, by the time he reached home, he had decided it was strange that, being a smoker and having seated himself in the only non-smoking compartment of a particular train making such a long non-stop journey to so remote a place, his one fellow passenger should have been perhaps the only person in the world who could have solved his doubt.

My interest and yours, I hope, is in the coincidence.

•        •        •        •        •  
Ages and ages ago I had to make a long journey, and I left a great London terminus shortly before midnight. It was in the summer, every seat of my compartment was occupied, and we were all men. A few minutes after leaving London the train stopped and one heard cries of “all tickets ready, please.” Then I noticed a rather scared-looking man feeling desperately in his pockets—one at a time, then two at a time—first sitting, then standing, lastly sitting again. The search was vain and, as the banging of carriage doors told plainly that the ticket collector was coming our way, the traveller leaned towards the man opposite and said: I beg your pardon, sir, but can you tell me

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what one ought to do when one has lost one's ticket?"

Without hesitation the man asked, "Where do you want a ticket for?"

"For Swansea."

"Here is a ticket for Swansea," said the man, as he drew something from his waistcoat pocket and handed it to the amazed recipient.

Whilst this brief conversation had been going on the sound of opening and shutting doors, with the words "tickets, please," showed that the collector was getting rapidly nearer, and the ticket had only just passed from hand to hand when he appeared at our door. The examination was over and the train again in motion ere the traveller, looking more scared than before, gathered his wits sufficiently to say: "May I ask, sir, how you happened to be able to supply me with a ticket for Swansea?"

I was dying to hear how the trick was done, for it beat me completely and I could hardly believe the evidence of my own senses. The other passengers appeared to be equally interested, and we all listened intently while a large, genial person satisfied our curiosity.

"It was the simplest thing in the world," he said. "I have a brother who lives in South America"—I will not swear that he said South America, but I think so—"he has been here for a holiday and was staying

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with me in Swansea when the time came for his return. We went to the station to inquire about trains and tickets, and we found that it was cheaper to take a return excursion ticket than to pay an ordinary single fare. As I was going to see him off we took two return tickets and came to London. He left this evening for his ship and, when I was wishing him good-bye, he suddenly remembered his return ticket and offered it to me. I said I did not want it as I had my own, but he pressed me to take it, and said : 'Put it in your pocket, it may be useful ; you never can tell.' So I took it, and that is how I was able to give you a ticket for Swansea."

It sounded as simple as any conjurer's trick, when once you know it ; but I am inclined to think this is the most marvellous coincidence that could well occur, and I hug myself with the knowledge that I saw the thing done, and heard it explained exactly as I have set it down. At the time I did not quite understand how the excursion-return ticket was likely to cost less than an ordinary single fare ; but it was not my business ; I made no inquiry either then or since, and I daresay it is quite right.

Other coincidences are unpleasant, like that of Jones ; or piquant, like that of Grant ; but this ticket coincidence only just misses the impossible. At any rate I should like to put it to any one who is skilled in the doctrine of chances to say, what are the

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odds against the man, with a spare ticket for Swansea, getting into the same train and the same compartment of a carriage with the man who has just lost his ticket for the same place.

On the morning of the 21st June, 1796, Baco and Burnel, Commissioners of the Directoire, arrived at Port Louis, in the Ile de France, on board the French war ship *Forte* and landed in the afternoon in the face of some opposition. They did not stay long; for, after several stormy meetings with the Governor General and the colonists, the Commissioners were persuaded to take their departure, to the immense relief of the people of the island.

On the morning of the 21st June, 1909, the members of the Mauritius Royal Commission of that year—of whom I was one—also arrived at Port Louis, in H.M.S. *Forte*, and landed in the afternoon under somewhat different circumstances. In spite of depressing atmospheric conditions the people of Mauritius gave us a very cordial welcome, and if there were some who liked our coming as little as their ancestors did the mission of the Directoire Commissioners they said nothing about it, and did everything in their power to help our work and make our stay in Mauritius a pleasant one. Still the coincidence is rather curious.

## ABSENCE OF THE CRITICAL FACULTY

ONE night, not so very long ago, I was at Covent Garden. There was practically no one in the boxes and at least a third of the stalls were without occupants. I concluded that the explanation of the empty house was that an opera was being played which had never been heard in London till that evening, and no leader in the fashion of what one ought or ought not to hear had told opera goers that this would be a performance which must not be missed. The music was interesting and attractive, the singers were satisfactory, the staging excellent and the story was not as inconsequent, as ridiculous or as brutally tragic as is often the case in grand opera. Between two acts I went to talk to a couple of friends who were making a little oasis in a desert of vacant stalls. One was the editor of a Review which has the distinction of being unlike other Reviews and, as I sat down, he was saying to his companion, "If you will only tell me where I can find some one who is not afraid to write the truth, some one who has the courage to say publicly

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what we all say to each other, who will not go on perpetrating grotesque flatteries and repeating ridiculous lies,—I shall be for ever grateful. But where can one find such a man ?”

This seemed a capital opening, either for business or for mere talk, so I said “I am the man.”

He appeared to be rather taken aback, but said ; “You ! what will you write about ?”

“Oh, plays, operas, actors, singers, managers. If one wrote the truth about the personnel of the stage you would probably get all the sensation you want ; but if that was not enough you might widen the net till you took in all public characters, politicians, statesmen, soldiers, artists, authors, professional beauties, financiers, lawyers, doctors, *tout le tremblement*.”

My friend, a little irritated, struck in, “Yes, yes, but what are you going to say ?”

“There is no lack of things to say if all you want is the truth ; supposing one began with the stage and named the various actors and actresses who at the ages of fifty, sixty or seventy, insist upon playing parts supposed to represent characters of from seventeen to seven and twenty ? Or you might name quite young ladies whose only qualifications for the stage are their good looks and affectionate temperaments and suggest to the actor-manager—or whoever is responsible for their presence there—that you pay half a guinea to see good acting. Again, one might urge that if dancing

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is offered as an inducement, a real dancer must have the spirit of the dance in her, it is not sufficient to run aimlessly about the stage, to wave the arms, or even to jump quite heavily at intervals. The prettiest stockings and the sweetest smile do not make this dancing. As regards famous singers there are a number who sang in their farewell concerts—how long ago shall we say?—and are doing it still. For these and others ‘past their prime’ and who must not any longer be held quite responsible, would it not be kind to tell them that they do not give pleasure but make listeners feel hot and uncomfortable, bitterly sorry that happy memories of a once idolised name should be destroyed by inability to realise the truth as regards their own powers.”

“No,” he said, “no thank you, I am afraid that kind of writing would ruin me.”

The conductor appeared, the lights were turned down and, as I got up to return to my own seat I could not help saying; “You do not really want the truth.”

People who depend for their livelihood on pleasing a large number of readers cannot afford to speak the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth; even when they do print a little of it, they nearly always get into trouble. The critical faculty is practically absent in the British public—absent in a way in which it is possessed by some other peoples. Go to an Italian theatre, say at Bologna, Milan or Naples, and listen to

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a new or a known opera, sung by untried or already famous singers. When a passage is well sung or a theme appeals to the audience, it is at once greeted with expressions of approval and delight—and the audience manifests its disapproval in the same unhesitating way. These interruptions may be irritating in a way, but they are spontaneous, honest and usually good criticisms. I have seen the prima donna weeping on the stage because she sang out of tune and the audience let her know it; five minutes later she was all smiles because the same audience were cheering an exceptionally fine rendering of another passage.

I was in Palermo when Mascagni's opera "Amico Fritz" was given for the first time in Sicily. The evening promised to be more than usually interesting because it was freely stated that the Sicilians were going to make a row and stop the performance, to pay off a grudge against the composer. It was not, you see, an occasion for criticism but just for a row. As soon as the curtain went up, and practically all through the first act, there was almost ceaseless booing, four men sitting together in the front row of the stalls making themselves a very decided nuisance. Others shouted, "turn them out"; the boopers stood up and invited any one to come and do it; many others stood up and joined in the wrangle, and so it went on till the fall of the curtain. There was a longish interval and then the orchestra played the intermezzo. Just at first no one



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seemed to take any notice, they talked and laughed. Very soon, however, the noise died away and the intermezzo concluded amidst a storm of cheering that did one's heart good to hear. That was not all; these Sicilians were so carried away by the music, music they had never heard before, that though they had come, not to listen but to break things, made the conductor play that intermezzo three times before they would allow the curtain to be raised for the second act. The rest of the opera was received with delight, and when the curtain finally descended Mascagni had gained a veritable triumph. He was not there to hear it.

Some one may say, "That is all very well in Italy, it would not suit the British temperament; we don't like interruptions; if any one says 'Bravo!' above his breath, half a dozen people with a far finer ear for music say very decidedly, 'Sh— Sh——' and he feels very small."

Exactly, I don't deny the objections to the Italian method, but I prefer it to the English method, of which the following is an excellent instance.

Within the last two years, one night during the season, I was at Covent Garden, when a well-known opera was performed to a full house. It does not matter about the others, but the prima donna was an established favourite with a fine voice. The play went well enough for a short time until suddenly the *primo tenore* dashed on the stage, struck an attitude and began to shriek out perfervid words. The very first note he

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struck was so flat that one really shuddered, and having begun there he continued it right through a very long act and succeeded in making all the other singers, even the prima donna, sing out of tune, and I certainly thought that his fiendish discords affected the conductor and sent the orchestra to pieces. An Italian audience, in a famous Italian opera house—La Scala, San Carlo, or any other—might have killed this man, but they never would have let him harrow their feelings for forty minutes. At Covent Garden there was, of course, the most decorous silence until the curtain fell, and then, to my amazement, this lamentable performance was rewarded by thunders of applause, and the wretched tenor, who ought to have been gagged, was called three times by the discriminating public, after which he presented himself and bowed four other times without any call.

When you have been party to a scene like that is it possible to believe that the British public have any real critical faculty as regards music? Of course I am not thinking of individuals but of bodies of people such as are found in any place of public entertainment.

As to stage plays, neither authors nor actors can give the public credit for much critical power or they would offer something more worthy of criticism. Either that, or the absence of the critical faculty in the English audience, has led to musical comedy becoming the popular attraction with London playgoers. No one

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need mind if they have no faculty for criticising musical comedy, and no one is astonished when a play of that kind runs for years. Of course it is not only inability to condemn what is obviously bad, but inability to appreciate what is good—unless the words of the play are spoken in a language beyond the ken of the listeners, such for instance as Sicilian or Scotch. The best play I have seen in London for two years did not run for a fortnight. No doubt it is futile to argue on questions of taste—for have we not the post-impressionists and the methods of suffragettes always with us?—and I suppose people who do possess the critical faculty are just as little likely to agree about questions of criticism. My point is that there is in England, in regard to questions of Art, a natural lack of sound critical power that is rather singular. It may be dangerous to say so, but the leading of the divinely inspired seems sometimes faulty. How many times have you been induced to spend a profitless evening at a theatre because you have read in the public prints that the experts were pleased to approve that performance? “One of the brightest, merriest, and most tuneful first nights that have (*sic*) ever ushered in a lasting success”; these are not my words, they are those of a professional critic about a play produced last night, and they point the moral because, to-day, I heard a determined first-nighter describe this very play as the worst he had ever seen, and he was right. Sometimes the critique appears to differ so widely from

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the evidence of one's own eyes and ears that suspicion is forced upon one, the sort of suspicion you feel when you read in a financial paper the description of a new and very promising venture, or when you see columns printed daily in praise of a neglected show until at last the whole town is led to struggle for admission. It is equally remarkable, but much less common, when you find a play—described by a few kindly but damning sentences—which seems to you to be full of good writing and good acting, and to need but a little discriminating cutting to make it excellent. There is some independent criticism in the English theatre : the pit and gallery like to make themselves heard ; but it is questionable whether they form the part of the audience best able to judge a play on its merits. Indeed it is doubtful whether the author, with these strange judges ever before his eyes, does not sometimes—or is it often ?—write to propitiate them and so escape their damaging verdict. I think we have all heard of the insistence of pit and gallery on “a happy ending,” and if that indictment is true in regard to such large and respected sections of a theatre audience, it supports my general contention, that the faculty for discriminating criticism is absent.

It would be more difficult to establish such a contention in reference to pictures, but still the observant must have noticed the direction of the wind by the passing of straws. A great exhibition of pictures is

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opened and, probably on the same day, the newspapers contain long critiques in which attention is invited to a number of named pictures. When the galleries are thrown open to the public, it is round those selected pictures that the largest crowds will be collected. If the professional critics are fairly well agreed as to what are the best pictures that is not strange, for at the private view they can compare notes, and very probably they will ask the opinion of men who have devoted their whole lives to the study of pictures. Therefore it is probable that the attention of the public is well led to interest itself in the best pictures. Without any leading it might be interesting to learn what were the impressions carried away by the large majority of spectators. Every one must have noticed that there is a fashion in pictures, and the fashion is set by dealers, almost as much as the fashion in women's garments is set by Parisian dressmakers. If one, or two, or three well-known dealers, either singly or together, decide that it is high time for the picture-buying public to patronise the work of A. B., the dealers can, for a few years, spend their time and money in collecting examples by this master, and then dole them out to their patrons, the price rising as the fashion takes a firmer hold, and as the supply diminishes, or appears to diminish. There are so many pictures by old masters, of every painting nation and every school, that it is not difficult to ring the changes or to set the tune to the

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profit of those who had the foresight to recognise a rising from a falling tide, or to discover a prolific but not fully appreciated master. The buyer of modern pictures has to exercise his own discretion, and in all probability he will not live long enough to see whether Time and another generation will applaud or ridicule his judgment. The collector may be sure of one thing, however, of the pictures that merely please, even though they pleased greatly when acquired, he will live long enough to lose interest in them.

There are other matters, sculpture, architecture, the decoration of houses, furniture, and so on, but in these cases absence of the critical faculty is not so apparent. We all criticise everything, but I should not have ventured to invite a fall as a critic of criticism, were it not that the main dislike of foreigners for the English, as a nation, is because they declare that we are not only prepared to criticise them and all their works, but often to tell them they are wrong because their ways are not our ways, their views of life and the fitness of things not our views. That opinion is widely held and there is ground for it. Unfortunately foreigners think also that, when we tell them how their pump or their railway should be worked, we mean to be offensive, whereas, we desire to be only friendly and to show our interest in their public institutions; feeling, no doubt, that our own are superior. The foreigner need not mind that, for

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Great Britain produces a larger number of home-detractors, depreciators of things British, than probably all other nations in Europe. There are people here who never seem really happy unless they are abusing their own countrymen and comparing us with some other people to our infinite discredit. Our Navy, our Army, our great Institutions and their management, down to the methods of teaching in Board Schools and the designs of our postage stamps. They are all bad, and no doubt these good patriots, who take pleasure in this kind of abuse, are the only people who could set things right. I cannot pretend to expert knowledge on any subject but, from what I have seen myself, I don't believe that England is in a parlous state in regard to any of these questions. Our Navy is the best in the world ; our Army learned a great deal in South Africa, and has made good use of the experience, whilst Mr. Atkins continues to provide us with fighting material of a very high order, as any one will find who takes him on. There is, however, one subject about which I may know something, and that is the English boy of a certain class. I am always reading and always hearing that the English boy has degenerated, and continues degenerating to such an extent that this is one of the greatest dangers with which the nation is threatened. That is the exact opposite of my experience—with a reservation. Not only do I believe, I am certain, that the nation

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possesses an immense reserve of healthy, courageous and intelligent boys, the sons, for the most part, of not-very-well-off gentry all over Great Britain and Ireland ; boys with a fair education, who have led a country life and are only anxious to be sent to the ends of the earth and be given responsibility ; something difficult and dangerous to do in the interests of their country, for the honour of the flag. There are thousands and thousands of them, and I don't know any other country that possesses a reserve of the same kind of material. In England the supply is always enormously in excess of the demand, and the pity is that those who go to what must be usually a life of exile in the service of their country are so little remembered by those who are themselves never forgotten, because they prefer the dangerous hardships of the life of London.

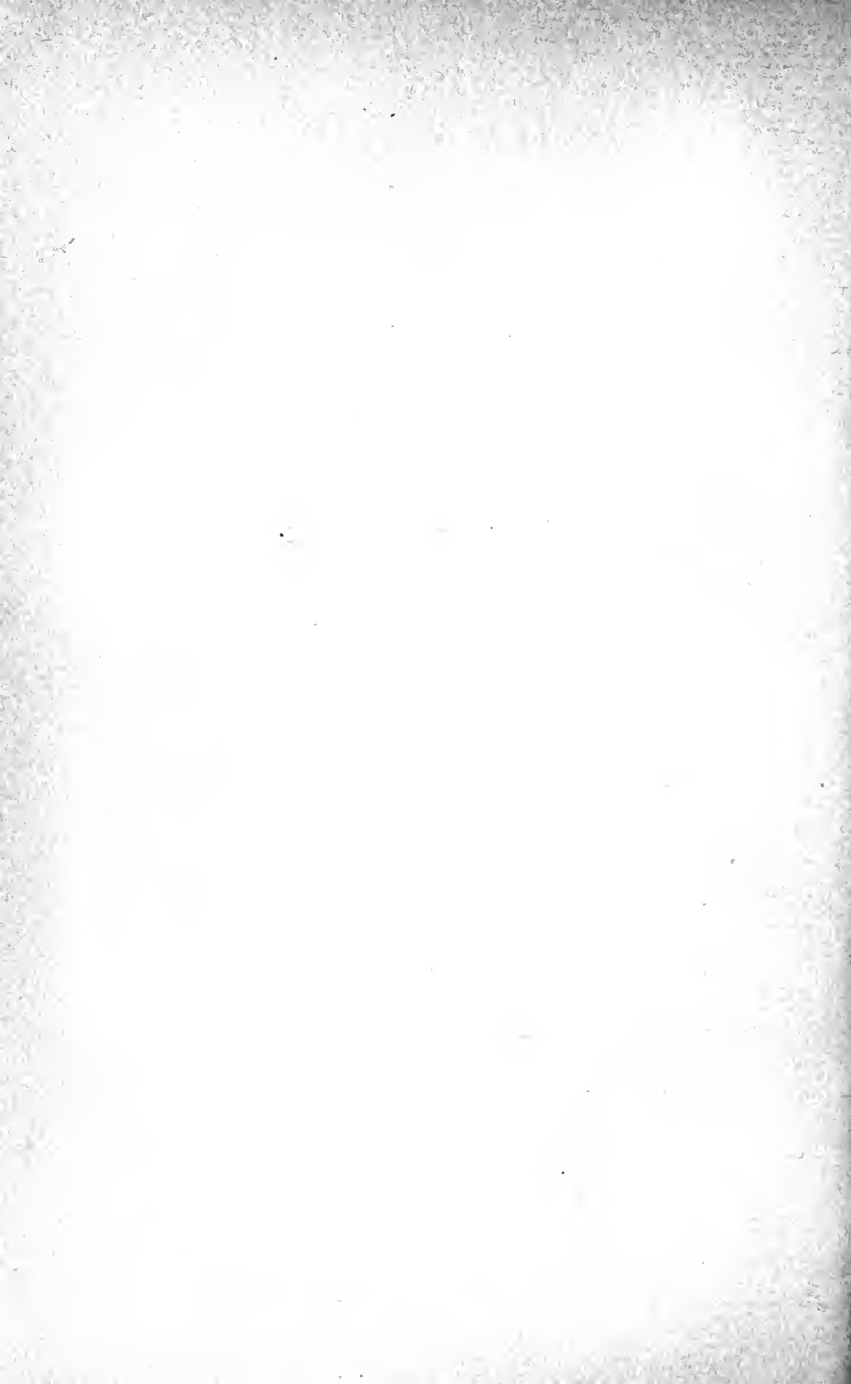
I said there was a reservation ; the boys I spoke of do not come from, and do not know the ways of, boys of the same class who have lived for even a few months in London. The boy who has been to a public school and a university—or not—and then lives idly or with some small job in London, really spending his time in getting initiated into the ways of the town, is not the boy I mean. It is indeed hardly fair to expose weak youths—with little or no character—to such great risks, when the streets seem to be littered with the bones of the many who have



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already fallen by the way. Unless absolutely necessary, it is not wise to ask even the strong to face insidious temptations which cannot altogether be avoided. When I say that in the oversea life I am thinking of there are practically no pleasures, any one will understand that a course of London as an introduction to it would be a needless cruelty.

It sounds a far cry from the absence of the faculty of criticism to the widely-held belief in the degeneracy of the British boy, but it is not really.



## FAITH AND FICKLENESS

“**A**ND what is it to be faithful?”

“It is,” she said, “to rise and never set, O Star of utter weariness! It is to kindle, never to be quenched, O fretting fire of midsummer! It is to be snared and always sing, O thrilling bird of dulness! It is to come, not go; smile, not sigh; wake, never sleep.”

“What then is to change, to be fickle?”

“Ah! to be fickle,” she said, “is showers after drought, seas after sand; to cry unechoed; to be thirsty, the pitcher broken; and, ask now this pitiless darkness of the eyes, to be remembered though Lethe flows between.”

These are strange sayings and though few will accept all, many must feel themselves drawn to sympathise in part. I do not know where they come from and the friend who sent them to me can answer no questions now; so, though they suggest a writer whom I admire, I do not know whether he put the words in the mouth of one of his characters to convey his own view or to describe a special temperament.

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Certainly this recital of love-faith and love-faithlessness would appeal so strongly to the feelings of the friend from whom it came to me that she would accept it as a creed. That is curious too, for an original yearning after the negation of all that is here implied, followed by a weariness of everything—"thirsty, the pitcher broken"—may have been the real cause of her death.

The constancy described in the bitter words I have quoted—or in any other words—is of no value for practical purposes. Most people, if they were asked, would give their idea of constancy in love in very similar terms and without qualification. I do not mean terms similar to those quoted—nothing of the kind—but in terms which from all of them would be nearly identical. For real application to the cases of Jack and Jill any general description is valueless; constancy for each of them depends entirely on their respective temperaments. I cannot support that statement better than by quoting—not from a book but from a letter—these sentences: "loyalty of heart and thought is a poor thing without loyalty in deed. What will be the result where the woman fails in the former—as I have done—and the man in the latter—as he has done. I should think disastrous." As a proof of the difficulty of seeing clearly what the future will bring forth, it is interesting to record that this particular Jack and Jill, having decided to make the experiment, never regretted it. They are both a good deal older now and it might

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seem cynical to wonder whether time has changed the lady's views.

To discuss profitably such questions as constancy and inconstancy means that one must be wholly impersonal and recognise the truth of the old saying that "sauce for the goose is not sauce for the gander." There are placid and not very imaginative temperaments which may be perfectly-satisfied with absolute constancy, a constancy so natural and so thorough that it has never once thought of straying from its path. That may be the constancy which "rises but never sets." If mated to another being of the same type the union should prove quite satisfactory to the couple, though their friends might find them a trifle dull. If, however, such a nature be tied for ever to another with a disposition which is the exact opposite, then, probably, the other party to the union would express herself as in the quotation. I say "herself," for, whatever a man felt, it is unlikely that he would speak like that. It is as impossible for natures so opposite to live together in mutual love and good-fellowship as to blend fire and cotton-wool. A man of temperament and imagination will get on much better with a faithful but colourless spouse than when the positions are reversed. He won't like it; but he will reason it out by himself, and if he is worth anything he will try to be just and probably recognise that if she is passively aggravating he is actively so. The power to reason

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and the sentiment of justice are rare in women, where others are concerned : still rarer where their own case, their own trials and their own happiness are involved.

Moreover, when a woman wants something, she must have it at once, or very often does not care to have it at all ; a man is content to wait, he may even enjoy waiting, so long as he sees a fair chance of gaining his end some day. The woman's cleverness consists in making him wait as long as she chooses, provided her intuition reveals the breaking-point of his purpose. Once he passes that he is lost, unless he is an invertebrate creature not worth capture. In speaking of faith and fickleness I am not concerned with the final breaking of all ties between lovers ; but nothing, probably, is so remarkable as the power of a particular type of woman over a type of man who is neither a fool, nor a knave, nor a weakling. If the truth must be told few men are faithful from beginning to end, and, knowing they are backsliders, they try to make up for it in other ways. So while, as a body, they attempt no very strong defence of their own position, as individuals they insist—as well as they can—upon faithfulness in their own wives and *bien aimées*. I have said that not infrequently men fall from the high ideal and, feeling that they have behaved exceedingly ill, endeavour to make up for it. If it is possible to imagine that a woman has, in some way or other, behaved badly to her man she very often tries to punish him further, to

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make him in the wrong and put him on his defence, in order to cover up her own fault and set his whole mind on seeking forgiveness for this trumped-up charge. And here is the extraordinary and well-nigh incomprehensible power of the quite average woman over the much more than average man. She thinks it is the power of her mind, of her quicker intelligence, her intuition, her good looks, her general success with all men ; but it is not any of these things. If the man who is in love with her is of the higher and more intelligent type, specially if he is a man of character, he sees, as clearly as she does, every ruse of the game she plays with him, and he deliberately submits to it because he is infatuated—recognising his own infatuation and the cause of it. She may have lied to him a hundred times, evil, hurtful lies, and he may have found her out in almost every one, and yet he not only accepts the position, but is satisfied if he feels it is the best he can get. His intelligence may even tell him that when she talks of love, she does not know what it means, certainly cannot feel it for him or she would sometimes make a small sacrifice of herself or her momentary pleasure to give him happiness ; yet he would rather take her on those terms than not at all. Sometimes he doubts even her faith and says to himself, “ that would be the last straw.” But would it, I wonder ?

This type of woman is exceedingly interesting as a study, though women who are good and charming and

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do not possess this baneful attraction can hardly bear to speak of her. She is to be found in all classes of society, and it is probable that in all cases there is a similarity in the life history of the species. From very early youth there is usually, in persons of this type, an absence of what is called principle, a quick determination of what they want, without any regard to the price to be paid, or to the feelings of others, except in so far that tried friends are ill-treated without ceremony while strangers find them perfectly charming.

Needless to say, when this type of woman possesses, as she usually does, many outward attractions, her youthful experience in declining to do what she did not like, and her determination to get whatever she wants, stand her in such good stead that, from twenty till she begins to show signs of age, she plays with the world as a ball at her feet, and is clearly of those who inherit the earth. It has been said that a determined person can secure anything he or she makes up his or her mind to have. That is not true unless the person is entirely unscrupulous, and will stick at nothing to gratify either the momentary whim or the carefully planned ambition. It is probable that those I am thinking of go nearer to achievement than any others. Fools are easily led, and do not afford this type of woman enough excitement to induce her to waste her time over them. The better sort of man, as I have said, knows and still puts up with the maddening hurts



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for the sake of the atonement when his sorceress is in the mood, for the type does nothing by halves. It would be more difficult to say whether she is simply actuated by the pleasure of exercising her power over men and women alike—but especially over men—or whether she does nothing deliberately but everything thoughtlessly. I am inclined to think it is the latter. Deliberately to plan mischief and trouble and unhappiness, in return for kindness and affection, is too fiendish for super-impulsive and hyper-impressionable natures. If you begin with many wants, and grow up with a fixed idea that it is your mission in life to have them satisfied, you must quickly become so selfish that no thought of another will stand in your way. A limitless indifference to the wishes of others, especially of those who are only anxious to contribute to your happiness, is the very essence of selfishness, and is usually expressed most cynically by saying: "I did it because you always say you like me to please myself." When there is no counter attraction, no choice between this and some pleasant alternative, the self-centred *ego* will be perfectly adorable and woo more enchantingly than any Siren of them all. If then taken to task and an attempt made to enumerate all her recent and most impossible sins, it is like scolding a wilful and headstrong child who knows that the lecture will soon be over and, when over, dismissed from her mind.

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Will she be constant or fickle ?

She may be both ; constant in what matters most, fickle in the rest : for, though I have ventured to write of her as a type, there are such differences in any unusual type that we come back to the individual and to heredity ; the colour of her hair or eyes might turn the scale. If tried by the definition quoted, and if the definition were reliable, it seems very unlikely that this compelling woman would be faithful, for she would not "rise and never set" ; she would not "kindle and never be quenched" ; she would not be snared for longer than she chose, if ever, and would only sing when she felt inclined. The idea that she and such as she should "come, not go," or "wake, never sleep" is grotesque. If tried by the definition of fickleness, she might easily be "showers after drought" and "seas after sand," though I do not see why those words should not be used to describe constancy. She might be "thirsty, the pitcher broken," though only when the wheels were running down ; but it is almost inconceivable that she should ever cry unechoed, or desire to be remembered when Lethe flows between. Either the definition is inaccurate, or I misunderstand it, or this particular type is outside the limits of any definition. She is constant to her own purpose, however often that purpose changes, constant, perhaps, to a promise she chooses to keep, but fickle in all else. It will not be wise to rely on the victory of the promise if

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some day it has to struggle against a strong and sudden temptation.

It would not be right to leave it there. Faithfulness and fickleness depend on individual characteristics, and I have taken only one type, and that a woman, because, while not very common, it is interesting if you can get near enough to study it. Suppose, however, another and simpler definition of faith in love. "Absolute trust on both sides. A real endeavour to understand, always, and a determination to believe only the best. Mutual truth-telling and a mutual recognition of the fact that it is nearly always possible to do what another wishes you to do, if you also wish it. Not to take the first step, however insignificant, which your own heart or mind tells you may lead you where you have then no intention of going."

To carry that out in practice may be more difficult than it looks when read, but the effort leaves no heart-burnings, no bitterness, no feeling of deadly injury done or received. It is true that one's happiness or misery depends, not on the truth but on what one believes to be true. So people with strong inclinations and kind hearts save their consciences by concealing facts, facts that spell unfaithfulness. It would be difficult to support this habit as a satisfactory guide to conduct, though it seems to have acquired considerable popularity amongst those who decline to discuss such questions. Real constancy means to be faithful under

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the strongest temptation to be otherwise. The quotation which serves for text to these considerations seems to disparage constancy and exalt fickleness ; no doubt that is because it stands without the context. Constancy, either in love or friendship, or for a cause, can but ennoble those who seek it and ensue it ; while to be fickle is to be cruel in order to gratify vanity, to be selfish and inconsiderate and, in the end, is probably to be false.

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[At the edge of a wood of

tall, wide-spreading trees,  
Whose blossoms, heavy perfume to the breeze  
Exhale ; while clear-voiced birds of song up-raise  
A soul-entrancing melody,

a man and a girl, a girl very fair to see, are seated on the grass. They look as if the world had been made for their special benefit, and had remained their private property.]

**H**E (*after a long silence*). How absolutely hopeless it is, to try to express any extreme emotion in the words of any language.

**SHE**. Yes ; but then no words are wanted. As you say, they annoy by reason of their futility, and they jar upon a silence, filled with joy so unspeakable, that, for seconds of time, one doubts whether one has not left the earth, and reached those realms of bliss of which some hearts still hold a vague and yearning consciousness.

**HE**. To feel that consciousness argues the existence

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of a very rare temperament. Indeed, it does much more: it proves a sensitiveness to the refinement of feeling which is as uncommon as a blue rose. Eastern sages, writing ages ago, were alive to the worth of such a gift, and, though they wrote of that, as of other wonders of which they were only dimly conscious, they put the right value on the possession when they said, that a man might think the world well lost to gain and keep the love of a woman so dowered. It seems to me singularly ill-ordained that, at the moment when I have found in you the incarnation of love, I should have voluntarily made a promise, by reason of which I shut the door of Paradise in my own face, lock it, and throw away the key; in the hope that, in the shadowy hereafter, I may find it again, and with great clatter, with trumpets and with shawms, I may then enter into possession. Only, meanwhile some one else may find the key!

SHE. No one will find it.

HE. May open the door.

SHE. No one else can open it.

HE. May enter—— No, I must not say that. Indeed, I know it is wicked to say any of it.

SHE. Then, why do you do it?

HE. Because I want you to contradict me. Because you are adorable. Because I would count the world well lost—ten worlds, for that matter—to gain and to keep you for my own. Because I love you! I love

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you! I love you! And, after all, that seems a fact so infinitely beneath your notice that I can hardly understand why I say it, as though I were proclaiming to you tidings of great joy.

SHE. Do not be absurd. You know that, if not exactly "tidings," it is my great joy to hear you say you love me—so say it, say it again. You cannot repeat it often enough.

HE. I love you. "In winter and summer; near and far; as long as I live, and through the beyond." But I would not only *speak* of love. Speech is halting; words are cold and colourless. The language of love is of the eyes, the lips, the hands. It is a fire which smoulders, blazes, dies, and rises again. It has colour and warmth, and the sparks fly and scorch and burn; the flames are blue, as with the salt of the sea, and rose-red with the blushes of sunset; and perfumed smoke, like the clouds of heaven, veils the lights and hovers above the deep mysterious tones of the far-inmost glow. We look into the fire and read its fascinating stories, but they are not told in words.

SHE. May there not be a language of silence and of sighs?

HE. Perhaps. Ah! when you guess so well, will you not release me from my promise?

SHE. It would not help you, if I did.

HE. Why?

SHE. Because then it would be different.

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HE. How different ?

SHE. I should love you more.

HE. I know it, and that is why I ask. I should win a changeless love, "true and tender, strong as death."

SHE. Do you think it will change ?

HE. No. It was not my suggestion.

SHE. That was before. This would make it certain ; but I might suffer, because it would be different for you, and, through you, different for me.

HE. Do you mean that I should be different ?

SHE. Yes.

HE. Ah ! you think that then I might say it did not matter ! You cannot believe I could be so despicable.

SHE. No. It never occurred to me that then you could think it did not matter.

HE. But do you not see that to the end of my life I could never forget that you sacrificed everything for me, and that I should love you a thousand times more, if that were possible.

SHE. Yes. That is what I see, and that would make the difference.

HE. What can you mean ?

SHE. Just this ; that then you would feel you *had* to love me, and I should never forget that either, and the love would not be the least like it is now.

HE. *Touché*. I am worsted ! That was a subtle



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thrust. Straight home to the heart. Where have you learned such skill in fence?

SHE. From you and Love.

HE. I was right to say the language of love is not written in words, and some day I will prove it.

SHE. Yes—some day; when “some day” shall be “now.” Come, the daylight dies, let us go home.

*Some people calling I could  
be silly,*



## AN HOUR-GLASS AND A SUN-DIAL

I WAS sitting in my office in the East, surrounded by stacks of official papers with which I had been struggling all the morning, when a servant brought in the mail letters from England. Among them I found one from a friend telling me that certain literary lights—whose fame only I knew—were about to found a new magazine, to be called the *Hour-glass*, and my friend asked me if I would write something for the first number, which would appear shortly. I have said I was very busy, the arrival of the mail did not make the work less, and I was in no mood to write for a journal which would appear under such distinguished auspices. Still, it was then or never, so more to amuse my friend than with any other object, I left myself ten minutes for luncheon, and spent an hour in what I suggested might serve as what is called a “Foreword” to the new magazine. Those who read my contribution may conclude that it did not appear in the pages of the *Hour-glass*. It did not : no modern magazine or that name ever saw the light—so far as I know.

## ALSO AND PERHAPS

"What are you?"

"I am an Hour-glass."

"What is that?"

"Oh, a device for counting an hour of time."

"Can you do that?"

"Certainly."

"How?"

"It takes the sand you see inside me exactly one hour to run from the glass globe above to the one below."

"But sand does not run, and your sand seems to be sitting quite still at present. In what way are you counting the hours?"

"If you turn me the other way up you will see how I do it."

"I should not dream of taking such a liberty."

"But I do not mind, I am ambipone."

"I dare say you are, though I have no idea what it means, but apparently, you can't even mark one hour unless some one helps you."

"I take no interest in time beyond recording an hour when I am put to it."

"Well, what o'clock are you now?"

"What o'clock? I am nothing o'clock."

"Then I hardly see what use you are. You apparently sit quite still on your ambipone, which I suppose is your latter end, and think about nothing at all, until some one comes and turns you on your former end,

## HOUR-GLASS AND SUNDIAL

when the sand trickles through your waist. An undignified existence where you never know whether you are standing on your head or your heels."

"I tell you I take no interest in the passing hour, but men and women do."

"Then I suppose they carry you about in their pockets, but you must be an inconvenient time-keeper if you have to be turned every hour and can't be left for fear your hour strikes and you cease to work."

"A watch stops if you don't wind it."

"I am not discussing watches, they are full of wheels instead of sand, but at any rate they don't want winding every hour, and they have faces on which you can read the time of day. You have no face and no hands, and there is nothing to be particularly proud of in having two ends, for every one and everything has a beginning and an end, and that is at least as valuable and does not sound so disreputable."

"I am symbolical."

"Dear me. Does that mean that you are transparent, and any one can see that the Hour-glass contains only air and sand?"

"You are probably stupid, and you are certainly rude, and like most critics you are, apparently, ignorant, or you would know that I symbolise the short span of mortal life, the passing hour, and that I am the companion of death."

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"Thank you, yes, I have noticed that, in Academy pictures, you form part of the personal luggage of the man with the scythe, but, though you complain of my rudeness, I should not have mentioned your close connection with the Destroyer and the things which perish; it is too suggestive. I may however assume that your name is symbolical of the fact that if you secure an Hour's attention your purpose is accomplished."

"And pray what are you?"

"I am a Sun-dial."

"You speak with the air of one on whom the destinies of the world depend."

"I am the Dial of the Sun, on which they do depend. As I am of the world I cannot be the Sun, so it is as well to be his register."

"You are very old-fashioned."

"Doubtless, but not altogether out of date; and though I want no winding or turning, I still show the time."

"When the Sun shines, otherwise you are useless."

"Pardon me, I am always interesting as an artistic and scientific study, and when the Sun shines I am extremely useful."

"You are somewhat of an egoist, but I can't take you at your own valuation."

"Very likely. Your views of life are limited by want of opportunity and faulty construction. Whichever end you stand upon you look up to your own

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waist, a degrading attitude. The constant presence or imminent coming of Death must also be depressing, and even those most interested in you cannot get away from the thought that brief life is here their portion."

"I should prefer to avoid personalities, but, besides the fact that your face is covered with scratches, you appear to be tattooed with some words which add to your grotesqueness."

"And I should have thought that in your latest 'symbolism' you would have learned at least how to read. The words are 'Time teacheth trust': they are my motto."

"You are evidently a T-totaller. In view of the most recent legislation you are probably wise."

"If that is a sample of your spirit, no thirsty soul is likely to be intoxicated by over indulgence at the Sign of the Hour-glass."

"Your self-sufficiency is probably the result of living on a pedestal. I hate prejudice; but what does your motto mean?"

"Something beyond your understanding and most men's belief. You are for an hour, while I am for all Time."

"Yes, you make me tired. I suppose some man who believed took the trouble to write that confession of his faith. He must have died years ago; whatever made him write it?"

"He died hundreds of years ago, and he wrote it

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because in another garden he saw a sun-dial with the inscription 'Time tryeth trothe.' He was a lover with great faith. It was his religion and he proclaimed it."

"Well, I don't suppose he has left many disciples here. America is clearly your home now."

"Why America?"

"Because it is the land of gigantic Trusts."



## DEATH'S DEVOTION

"Why call it, Death's devotion?"

"'Twas he who drank the potion—"

"J'AI cinq cartes à carreaux."

"Combien?"

"Quarante-neuf."

"C'est bon."

"Quinte au roi?"

"Bon."

"Ça fait vingt. I have also quatorze de rois, which makes ninety-four, et trois as, ninety-seven—je joue carreaux, ninety-eight. That is yours and the rest are mine, making me one hundred and nineteen. You are Rubiconed, but, fortunately for you, for the smallest possible number. Two hundred and twenty and three twenty-five, I win—five hundred and forty-five in the evening; the luck has been all on my side to-night. Shall we play again?"

"Well, I think as it is past two A.M., it is hardly worth while to begin another game. We will smoke

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one more cigarette, and you shall tell me of your inter-view with Death."

"Willingly, but another small brandy and soda will help the tale along."

The man who had so evilly entreated his friend over that last game of *piquet* was Raoul de Mareuil, soldier, scientist, courtier and wanderer over the face of the earth, seeking fortune and adventure, and finding with them (for he had brains enough to be successful at almost any game) a great many friends of all nationalities. It was natural that he should have much in common with Englishmen, for his mother was an Englishwoman; he spoke English and French equally well, and with his intimates mixed up the two languages with a charming but bewildering fluency, though it was evident to those who had more than a casual acquaintance with him that he was at heart a true Frenchman.

After wandering in many lands his business or his inclination had taken him to the furthest East, where for some time he had been the guest of a friend. It was their nightly practice, when left alone for the evening, to play *piquet* till one or two in the morning, and then, before turning in, to smoke that "last cigarette," which usually meant at least an hour's talk on diverse subjects of mutual interest. This was one of many such evenings, and no circumstances could have been conceived better calculated to frame a tale of love, adventure, or weird experience. A waning Eastern moon, brilliant

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beyond description, and shining with that blue tinge which is its special peculiarity in the small hours of the morning when the light is most intense, shone over a wide valley, enclosed towards the East by lofty but distant mountains, while Westward the view was limited by the close approach of a broken chain of low hills with spurs projecting out into the valley.

On the summit of the highest of these spurs stood the house where the two men were sitting. Round the foot of the hill wound a river, and this was joined at a point rather to the right front of the house by another stream of equal size. On the banks of these streams clustered the thickly built houses of a picturesque Eastern town, the red roofs striking a note of warm colour in that silvery sheen. On the outskirts of the town, scattered buildings served to relieve the green monotony of luxuriant foliage, while the eye caught here and there glints of water from river-reach or artificial lakelet. In the middle distance stood bold hills, covered with virgin forest and rocky limestone cliffs with vari-coloured sides, so sheer that no foliage would cling to them. Beyond these, haze—miles and miles of hazy distance—through which great mountains seemed to loom, grey and indistinct, and over all the blue heavens; that extraordinary Eastern night-sky, so wondrously blue, that when you see but a patch of it above the fountained courtyard of an Eastern dwelling, you cannot at first feel certain whether it is painted

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ceiling or the blue empyrean. Unlike those Northern latitudes, where the clearness of the atmosphere seems to invite the gazer to reach down the great stars from heaven, here, in this haze-charged night, they twinkle and glimmer from zenith to horizon, through many a veil of mist ; and Venus, alone of all the constellations, dares to dispute the supremacy of the Queen of Night.

The subdued light within the room, the white walls, the lofty ceiling supported by heavy wooden beams resting on fluted, white pillars, the dark polished floor with its thick Persian rugs and skins of tiger and black leopard, the soft colours of the Oriental hangings, the rare prints on the walls, the few but admirably chosen pieces of furniture, the beautiful carvings and embroideries, the best and newest books, all combined to make a singularly attractive interior, full of harmoniously blended colours in striking contrast to the all-pervading radiance of the silver night.

Across the verandah with its tiers of lovely ferns and foliage plants, through the hanging baskets of many coloured orchids was wafted, on the scarce perceptible breeze, the intoxicating scent of jasmine and chempâka, while the only sound to break the silence was the occasional cry of the night-jar, that curious note which resembles nothing so much as the hollow rattle of a stone thrown across ice on a clear frosty night.

The friends pulled two comfortable chairs to one of the many wide doors that opened on to the marble-

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paved verandah, and with their backs to the attractions of the immediate surroundings and their faces to the moon-bathed valley beneath, de Mareuil told his tale.

"I was in Africa," he said, "and had spent months exploring a buried city, where, besides meeting with several strange adventures, I contracted a horrible fever that completely prostrated me and made it necessary to abandon my researches and seek the nearest hospital. Unfortunately for me my buried city was far beyond the confines of even comparative civilisation, and by the time my people had carried me to a Government Hospital, where I could get the help of a French surgeon and the nursing of a Sister of Mercy, I was very bad indeed.

"I was too ill to take much notice of the hospital, but you know what the place is like. A long, narrow, white-walled building of one-storey with a row of windows on either side, a door at each end, and trestle beds at regular intervals down the sides, the patients' heads next the white-washed walls, their feet towards the vacant space which serves as passage between the beds. By each bed there was a small table and chair, and on the wall, in a tin frame, hung the bed ticket which told the name and date and arrival of the patient, the nature of his ailment and other particulars, and possibly the treatment prescribed. I cannot say I noticed these particulars when I was carried into the ward; I was too sick of the deadly journey in the

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hammock through the scorching heat, too feverish and throat-parched, too weary and pain-wracked, perhaps too light-headed to care about anything. I realised that at last the journey was over, that at last that maddening sway of the hammock was exchanged for blessed stillness and cessation from movement, that I seemed to have gone out of burning sunlight into cool shade, and that the tall figures, the dark complexions of my white-robed Arab bearers were exchanged for the sympathetic faces and deft fingers of the hospital surgeon and his devoted attendants.

"I do not know how time went, how long I had lain there, nor how things had fared with me. I think I must have been unconscious for days, but one evening, about 7 P.M., I was vaguely sensible that the Doctor and a Sister were standing by my bed and in hushed voices discussing the probability of my being able to live much beyond the morning. I know that it was borne in on me that their fears were stronger than their hopes, and I was too weak and exhausted to take much interest in my own chances.

"I must have slept shortly after this, for it seemed to me that a long time had elapsed, that midnight had come and passed, and I awoke to see the door towards which I was looking, open slowly and quietly to admit a strange figure. A tall, gaunt skeleton, with unusually large bones, and some kind of weird light in his eye-sockets that made me feel he could see, entered without

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noise, gently closed the door, and walked rather slowly towards my bed. I realised instantly that he was coming to me, and I noticed that he carried under his left arm a large, leather-bound book which seemed of great age and was closed by two old-fashioned, heavy silver clasps. Over his right shoulder the skeleton carried a heavy scythe which showed signs, both as to blade and handle, of much hard usage. Walking round the foot of my bed and stopping behind my little table, the skeleton fixed his curious eye-light on my face and said slowly and rather sadly : 'Je suis la Mort.'

"I was not surprised to hear that Death was my visitor, and I said 'Bon soir, la Mort, asseyez-vous, s'il vous plait.'

"He thanked me and sat down ; then taking the book on his thigh-bone and placing it in a comfortable position by crossing his legs, he unclasped it and looked over the pages till he came to one where he stopped and opening the book wide he turned to me and said : 'This is your page, and herein is inscribed the record of your good and evil deeds since ever you were born. The good are on this side' (pointing to the left page, where I could see there were only two or three short lines of writing), 'the evil are here,' said he, as he laid his hand on the right page of the book. 'I will read the record to you,' he said, as he turned the front of his skull towards me, and I felt those two luminous eye-sockets transfix me. 'First,' said Death, 'I will read your good deeds.'

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“The tale of my virtues was soon ended, and did not seem to me to possess any particular value. ‘Now,’ and again those lambent orbs were turned on me, ‘I will read your evil deeds.’

“The catalogue was a long one and it struck me that many of the statements were not worth recording, but truth to tell I was paying little heed, for I was absorbed in watching Death, and wondering how he could speak without a tongue and how all his bones hung together without any sinews or integuments or even so much as a strand or two of wire.

“You know how you feel when you are so ill that nothing surprises and nothing greatly affects you? That was how I felt, and, while I regarded Death with a mitigated interest and some faint curiosity, while I speculated whether, when he got up, the scythe, which was now leaning against the back of the chair, would knock it down and make a clatter that would wake every one in the Ward, I turned a practically deaf ear to the long list of my crimes, from concealing the truth and stealing sugar, to the robust misdemeanours of later years. There was a sort of rattle, as Death unwound his leg bones and closed the book, which he carefully fastened, saying as he did so : ‘To-night your record is closed and you will be required to give an account of it. Now,’ he continued, ‘my mission is ended, my time is up, and I must leave you.’

“He said this in a tone of dispassionate weariness,

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but rather as though he regretted having to deliver such an unpleasant message. He stood up and placing the book under his left arm, and the scythe over his right shoulder he prepared to go.

"Then, however, the feelings of a host asserted themselves and I said, 'I trust you will not leave without taking anything, and I am sorry that there is nothing better to offer you, but pray drink my *tisane* which is on the table by you.' Death gravely thanked me and turning to the table he took the bottle of *tisane* and poured some into the graduated glass measure that stood at his hand. He looked at me for the last time with those curiously lighted eye-sockets and realising, I suppose, the over grim humour of drinking to my health, he said nothing, but slowly poured the *tisane* through the cavity made by opening his jaws. I watched the liquid with great interest as it trickled down his ribs and back bone, crept along his leg bones and finally reaching the floor made a little pool by the side of the chair. As Death replaced the glass on the table and moved away I felt that his politeness in accepting my *tisane* must have made his bones very uncomfortable, but I hardly liked to suggest that he should dry himself.

"Whilst I still had this in my mind, I saw him reach the door, open it and go out. It could scarcely have closed ere I fell asleep.

"In that vague returning consciousness which comes

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with awakening, that dawn of mental and physical sensation which we can, at will, slightly prolong, but in cases of severe illness is always longer than in health, I heard the Doctor and the Sister talking by my bed, and speaking in eager tones of surprise and delight. I opened my eyes and I saw my friends with faces freed from anxiety smiling into mine.

“‘You are safe,’ the Doctor said, ‘it is only a question of time now, the fever has left you. The change came about 3 A.M., you had been restless till then and we feared the worst, but suddenly you grew quiet and fell into a deep sleep from which we are not sorry to see you awake, for you ought to be fed, though the sleep has saved your life. Your temperature has gone down to almost normal and your pulse is stronger—all you want now is nourishment. You have had a very narrow escape, and when you are strong enough you should leave the country for a change to a more temperate climate. You seem to have spilt your *tisane* some time during the night, but we don’t know how you did it, for the potion has fallen out of your reach and yet neither bottle nor glass is upset and no one saw you do it.’

“I looked from the Doctor to the floor, and there, close by the chair, exactly in the spot where Death had stood, was the still wet stain of the *tisane* which had been diverted so strangely from its legitimate use.”

## IN DREAMLAND

NOT long ago I was the victim of a curious dream, or rather nightmare. It was not, however, the dream which impressed me. That was vivid enough at the time, but now I remember only vaguely one or two incidents. The curious point, which struck me very shortly after the dream began, was that I had dreamed it all before, years and years ago, not acted it, the thing was too horrible, but dreamed it. The exact incidents of the nightmare are of little account; and, though I said to myself, as one says so often of dreams, "I will remember this thing," I could piece together no more the moment I awoke than I can now. When I did awake, by an effort of will, I knew that if I shut my eyes again quickly I should have to see the thing out, therefore I kept awake till I felt the demon had lost his grip of me, and when I slept again I dreamed not at all.

I cannot say that I have had quite this same experience before. Like others, I have seen the places of dreamland more than once and recognised them,

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not as material continuing cities, but as dream-places already visited. This was different. Some time during sleep and apropos of nothing I began a dreadful dream, and I instantly recognised that many years ago, in my childhood, I had been present at the same dream-tragedy. I knew exactly what was coming and what would be the end, and though I was asleep, I seemed to have some consciousness and some power of reasoning. Then the dream was not all horror ; indeed, it began well enough, so far as I was concerned, and, moreover, I was not one of the principal actors, and I knew the torture of the final act was not for me. I was merely a spectator ; but still, I was one of those dream spectators, who realise that it will go badly with them if they get in the way. It was my fate to have to run down endless flights of winding steps, and along passages mysteriously lighted, for steps and passages were cut in solid rock. I ran as surely no mortal ever ran, and at the time I thought it very strange that, so far from my legs feeling tied, or having any sensation of struggling ineffectually to make progress, I went like the wind, with the certain consciousness that I was pursued, but that I should reach a place of safety just in time to see some ghastly fate overtake another. I knew, also, that in that supreme moment both pursuer and pursued would perish, I knew (in my dream but not now) exactly what that end would be, and the horror of the coming sight

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was so great that I forced myself to wake. Yet now, even as at the moment of awakening, I could not describe the exact nature of this horror, which I did not see then, though I felt I had seen it before; but, when I awoke, I had a vague idea of what it had been before, and that I have still.

To dream, yet know one is dreaming, and to desire to dream on, or determine to awake, is probably a common experience, and comes no doubt just before awakening. But to begin a dream and instantly recognise that it is an old play, already seen, and to be re-enacted in every detail, is perhaps more uncommon, and the explanation, if dreams can be explained, harder to find. It is said that the whole duration of a dream is only a matter of a few seconds, but that may be doubted, for a dog certainly dreams for longer than this. Then, if the places one sees, and the experiences met with, in dreamland, are born of knowledge gained in some previous state of existence, that explanation will not account for the impossibilities so often met with in dreams. In my case, the strange feature seems to me to be this dream memory, which recalled a long-forgotten vision, suggested the incidents before they came and even supplied and left on the awakened mind a suggestion of a final scene for which the dreamer did not wait; because, as sometimes happens with a wide-awake playgoer, he has seen it before and does not like it.

*a dream he had  
dreamed before*

## ALSO AND PERHAPS

Whilst the impression is vivid, and the details as clear as may be, I will write it down, for dreams are more elusive than ghosts. It is seldom that one is greatly impressed by a dream, and for years my dreams have been so few, vague, and uninteresting, that it does not seem to me that I dream more than two or three times in twelve months. Last night there came to me an experience which affected me as no other dream, memory of a previous existence, sub-liminal suggestion, or whatever you like to call it, has ever done. I was on board ship, in the middle of a vast ocean, almost exactly at the moment when the vessel was crossing the line. I had been living the common board-ship life; I had played two rubbers of bridge after a rather strenuous day; it was very hot, my cabin was on deck, and about 11 o'clock I lay down on the bunk, for I could not bear the idea of any covering, even that of a single sheet. I was quite comfortable and went to sleep at once. *Now* I know that I dreamed, and I know that it was in the middle of the night, between midnight and 3 A.M., for I woke twice and both times it was still dark.

At first I dreamed of curious incidents which might easily have been connected with my real life. That is to say, the incidents had to do with people I know, they might even have transpired, might still transpire—though that would be very unlikely—but though they were imaginary, they were not extravagant or

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ridiculous, as is so often the case with dream-happenings. Gradually or suddenly, I cannot remember which, I was transported from these surroundings to others startlingly different. I, still living my earthly life, was being arraigned before Satan, or some authority acting under his direction. I was charged with the commission of sins I did not deny, and I was ordered to undergo the most horrible punishments which were immediately inflicted, until I suffered such torture that I felt no human body could possibly bear it and I must indeed have passed beyond the Gate of Life. I awoke and said to myself, "This is curious; I am perfectly comfortable, my head is on the pillow, there is nothing about me to cause these devilish horrors," and at once I sunk back into sleep and seemed to take up the thread of my dream just where it had broken. I continued to suffer torments, physical tortures so horrible that they left me only enough power of mind to realise that they were beyond the invention of any human thought or ingenuity. Then came a strange scene which impressed itself upon my attention at the moment and my memory afterwards. I was in a great and lofty chamber, draped with heavy hangings falling in long folds from the centre of the ceiling to the walls and from walls to ground. There were shades of purple and red, but the effect was simply a background of dark colour. Into this room came a man whom I recognised at once as a historical figure. At the time

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I knew him perfectly and I believe he was the Black Prince. In this place where I, straitly accused and straitly condemned, was undergoing an appalling punishment, the justice of which I made no attempt to dispute, this man seemed to hold some high authority. I can see him now, young and slight and good to look at, clothed in black and wearing the garments of his time : he lay back easily in a chair, and, on either side of him, stood five or six attendants who, at his bidding, took me into another room where they racked and sliced and seared my quivering flesh till I lost consciousness.

When that came back to me I was in the presence of a great company, listening to an account of my own transgressions delivered by, or by the command of, the Most High. Much was stated that was to my discredit, but one small fact was in my favour. It was recognised that the punishment that I had already received was severe and there was a pronouncement that, if I would promise to live henceforth a life of perfect goodness, I should still be given that opportunity ; but if not, I should be handed to the tormentors for ever. I was not prepared to give that promise, just on those terms. Again the Voice made a further pronouncement by which something was conceded to me, something which seemed to me to make that earthly life to which I was to return, still worth living. Then I promised solemnly to "live a godly, righteous, and



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sober life"—and there was a sublime satisfaction manifest in the faces of all that company.

Suddenly the thought came to me, "this is momentous to me, but how do I know that this is not some dream or hallucination ; how do I know that I am in the Very Presence and this is a real manifestation to save my soul ?" Whether I expressed my thoughts aloud or not I cannot say, but the Voice said : "You can be satisfied, for here is Andrew whom you know." Then I saw, just opposite and in front of me, the kindly face of a bearded man I knew quite well as a certain "Andrew," an assistant in a chemist's shop. The same Voice seemed to explain that he whom I saw, who smiled upon me with recognition, belonged to the Heavenly Company, but that it was then his mission to take the bodily form of an assistant in a chemist's shop and bear the name "Andrew." To myself I said, "Yes, of course I know Andrew," and in my mind I even placed the shop where I was accustomed to see him. I was completely satisfied, completely convinced that this was no dream but a real Vision of the Eternal and that I had given a binding promise of the effect of which there could be no doubt.

As I stood there I realised that all those others were conscious that, so far as my presence there was concerned, this was the end. It was obvious, and I awoke instantly ; not by a struggle through slow gathering wits, but straight to alert wakefulness.

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Poignant, tragic, amazing as had been the dream, it is hopeless to try to describe my feelings in those first moments of returned consciousness, with the words of my own promise ringing in my ears. It was still dark and the air, in those early hours of morning, was comparatively cool. I was thrilled, exalted, by a feeling which no effort of my own, and I felt sure no human agency, could have produced. As one does, I tried to recall the incidents of my vision ; they were fresh and vivid then, and specially I said to myself, "there was Andrew the chemist, he is the sign by which I know this was no dream, he is the link between this life and the hereafter." Then I began to materialise Andrew and in the effort I slept again.

It was broad daylight when finally I awoke to the daily round of ship life. For a few moments I was still deeply impressed by my vision, but it did not take me long to recognise that the "Andrew" of my dream had no mortal counterpart. I acknowledged that fact with regret. I did happen to know a bearded chemist of whose name I was ignorant ; but his face was not that of the heavenly being whose human counterpart was to be proof of the journey of my spirit into the realms of Darkness and of Light.

Still I could not get the thing out of my head and, as I dressed, I remembered that, yesterday, I had opened a book at random and therein read some pages telling the story of the repulse of an Indian raid and how,

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when it was over, the men were paid off with a pittance and told to go home. There was murmuring and the most dissatisfied persuaded one of their number to be their spokesman with the "Colonel." The man chosen for this office cared only to get back as quickly as possible to his wife and child ; but, for the sake of his comrades, he consented to go with them and be their spokesman. He went, stated their case, and at once obtained a promise to meet their just demand. The Colonel detained him on a pretext and, when his comrades had gone, ordered the man to be flayed alive, but changed the sentence to one of "staking out," with two hundred lashes, and then to be thrown into the road to the vultures. The torn and bleeding body was found by a friend who drove away the gathering vultures and helped the stricken man to ride the sixty leagues which lay between the place of his martyrdom and his home. In spite of his agony, an iron will enabled him to accomplish the journey ; then he slipped from his horse, staggered a few steps towards the open door of his cottage and fell down dead.

That must have been the motive of my dream. When dreams are rare, it is not often possible to connect the sleeper's subliminal experience—if it be that—with any definite recognisable cause. Here, however, there seem to be evident cause and effect. Some day, if I should find Andrew, or if the promise made to me be fulfilled, I may think differently.

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There is another dream, not mine but so authentic that several people who heard of it in time profited by it. Horse racing is a very favourite pastime in the East, as elsewhere, and in many places Australia supplies most of the horses engaged in the sport. New South Wales seems to have been the Colony from which horses were first obtained by dealers and sportsmen in India, China, Malaya, the Netherlands Indies and Ceylon, and they were called "Walers" from the country of their origin. Later the other Australian Colonies also exported horses, but they were, and are, called "Walers" indiscriminately. Many horses so exported have run in Australia and high prices are paid for those which have been successful; but it is common in the Far East to import a batch of nameless, young, unbroken and untried horses, train them for a meeting, name them, and run them in races arranged for them alone. Such horses are called "Griffins," and the usual practice is for the members of a Racing Club to subscribe for and import forty or fifty such animals about a month or six weeks before a meeting. All the horses in a batch cost the same price, and that is not a high one; those which prove useless for racing purposes are put to harness. Sometimes, but not usually, the whole batch is composed of thoroughbreds. On arrival, the Griffins are drawn for by lot and, when they have been allotted to the subscribers, the horses are broken to saddle and put in training at once. The process of

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naming takes time; some owners having a name ready when the horses are drawn for, while others wait till a week or less before the first day of the Meeting. Some years ago a batch of griffins had been imported for a race meeting by a Far Eastern club of which a married friend of mine was a member. He was keenly interested in the coming races and the first day was approaching when, one morning at breakfast, his wife asked him if a horse called "Kaloola" was entered to run at the meeting. He replied that he had never heard of such a horse, but he would make inquiries as the most unheard-of names were often given to griffins. "But," he asked, "why do you want to know and where did you hear this word?" Then she told him that she had dreamed a curious dream which, apparently, had nothing to do with horses or racing; but it was so vivid and had so impressed her that she had asked the question. She then related how she had dreamed that she was looking out over the very beautiful and extensive harbour of the place, which was, as usual, crowded with every kind of shipping from the great primitive Chinese junk to the modern British man-of-war. Her attention was, however, attracted to and riveted upon a merchant vessel lying in the centre of the harbour because the vessel carried, on deck, an enormous board on which was painted in gigantic letters the word Kaloola. That was all, nothing happened; but when she awoke the scene and the word were so impressed

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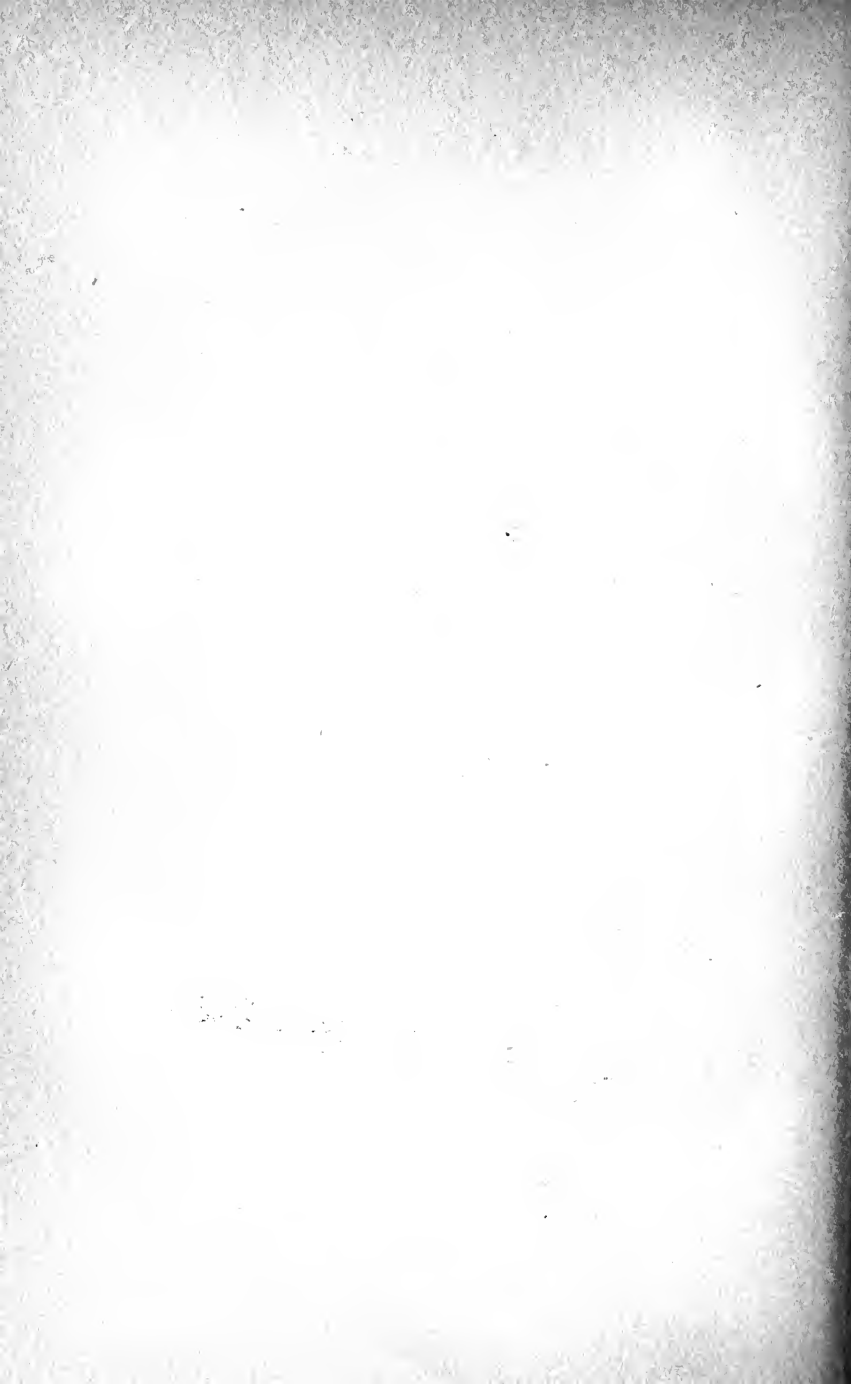
upon her memory that, seeking to solve the riddle, she wondered whether the strange word could be the name of a horse engaged to run at the meeting in which every one was then so interested. Dreams are vague things and even less reliable, as tipsters, than the race-prophets of newspapers, so my friend did not attach any special importance to this vision of a strange "poster" on the deck of a steamer. When, however, in the course of the day, he went to the club and made inquiries he found, to his surprise, that there was a horse, a griffin to wit, to which the owner had given the name Caloola, spelt with a C and not with a K. That struck him as decidedly curious; for, though he was much interested and, like most men fond of racing who live in a place where the two meetings are the great sporting events of the year, had discussed the chances of the various horses engaged, he had never heard the name Caloola. Pursuing his inquiries he did not find that this horse was greatly fancied by those who watched the daily trainings on the course—as indeed he had done himself—but he made up his mind to back Caloola purely on the strength of his wife's dream. Moreover, he told the story to several of his friends and it is almost needless to say that they also decided that it would be flying in the face of Providence if they neglected to back Caloola in the first race in which that griffin ran. They had not long to wait; for in a very few days the racing began, and Caloola

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won, rather easily, the first event in which she was engaged. That was not by any means Caloola's only victory, for she turned out rather well and proved herself to be the best griffin of her batch.

I know it may be said that there is an obvious explanation of this puzzle, an explanation which gains rather than loses by the fact that the dreamer saw the word Kaloola and not Caloola. However that may be, it cannot explain why this griffin should have won, out of a batch of probably not less than thirty, several of them with names as uncommon as Caloola.

*Dreamed of  
Caloola, but saw Kaloola*





## DODO ISLAND

THE islands once called Mascarenhas, in the Indian Ocean, 500 miles east of Madagascar, were discovered by Portuguese adventurers—probably Tristan d’Acunha and Alfonso Albuquerque—in 1507. The date is not absolutely certain, but it is fairly established that the discoverers, following their usual custom, called the first island they met with Santa Apolonia, after the name of the patron saint of the day on which the discovery was made, and the second was called Cirn , after the name of Albuquerque’s ship. Whether the Portuguese ever landed or attempted to make a settlement on either of these islands is a matter of dispute of no general importance, but, if they ever did occupy Cirn —otherwise Dodo Island—they abandoned it soon afterwards. The Dutch visited the place in 1598, and they seem to have been more struck by the dodo than by anything else they found. I have before me a woodcut, designed to show this first recorded arrival of European voyagers, and the artist (?) has crowded into the small compass of the picture the various trees, birds, animals, and even fishes,

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which seemed to him to be noteworthy. There is the palm *latanier*, with its large fan-shaped leaves; the curious *paille-en-cul* (now called *paille-en-queue*), the straw-tail, a white bird with two long and narrow white or red feathers in its tail; a giant tortoise, a large ugly fish, and the dodo.

But it is the dodo which occupies the place of honour in the sketch, and certainly claimed more consideration than any of the other details. Still, the straw-tail must not be dismissed lightly, for though it has webbed feet and lives on fish, it nests in hollow trees of the forest, at a height of 2000 feet above the sea, and takes its pleasure by circling through the air, either in the shadows of deep ravines or in the heights above the loftiest peaks. There are two species, one dazzling white and the other white with red tail feathers. The straw-tail can be seen to-day—though it is becoming rare—and, looking at the ungainly bird as it lies in your hand, you would not expect from it the splendid flights, the graceful movements it makes as it cleaves the sunshine and the shadow in wonderful turns and figures like those of an air-skater. The dodo has been extinct for over two hundred years, and it seems difficult for the casual observer to realise why it should ever have existed at all. Perhaps it was a mistake or a failure, and was put away in this strange island to escape the eye of man. Humanity will never again look upon the dodo in the glory of its plumage, but the skeleton

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of the bird remains, and that is sufficiently grotesque, with its shield of thin bone over the tail and its exaggerated breast-piece, giving it the appearance of being armoured at bow and stern while vulnerable amidships. It is improbable that, with that heavy body and those small wings, the bird could fly, but it is fair to suppose that it either gobbled or quacked—probably quacked to excess. There may be something in the climate which tends to induce quacking, and the dodo may have been created as a sign and a warning.

No one seems to know the origin or meaning of the word dodo, and I suggest that it is a corruption of the Malay word *bôdoh*, which means silly, a fool. To the Dutch, already established in Java, this word would be quite familiar and, when they saw the absurd looking bird, it is very likely they would call it *bôdoh*.

Whether the Portuguese ever collected any specimens of the dodo it is impossible to say. Probably they came, saw, and sailed away. When the Dutch first visited the island they certainly killed and captured a large number of the birds. They came again in 1644, remained there more than half a century, picked up the remaining dodos, and in their turn sailed away. In 1715 the French came—if I seem to be writing history the reader must pardon me, for it is neither my wish nor my object to do so, simply the necessity to mention a few leading facts is forced upon me—and, though the dodo was no more, the island still

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retained the *cachet* of his respectability, so they remained. When they had become well established, with troops and ships, slaves to cultivate the sugar canes, a Captain-General and a Colonial Assembly to manage their affairs, the place acquired a notoriety which drove the memory of the dodo from men's minds. The island lay exactly in the route of ships sailing to and from the Indies by the Cape ; England and France were then usually at war, and the good people of Dodo Island, seeing their opportunity, were not slow to make the most of it. Therefore it became the fashion for adventurous Frenchmen, usually sailors from St. Malo, Brest, and other French ports, to make their way to the East, fit out fast ships with the assistance of the island merchants and speculators, obtain Letters of Marque from the Governor, and then, as privateers, attack all British vessels likely to fall a prey to a well-armed ship's company with everything to gain and nothing to lose. The *corsaires* of Dodo Island, under the command of a series of bold adventurers up to every move in the game, were singularly fortunate. For years and years these privateers, thoroughly equipped for their job, sailed from the island with roving commissions and every British merchantman they met was attacked, the crew killed (if they showed any fight) or taken prisoners, the ship looted and sent back to the island as a prize, or, if it were fast and handy, used as another privateer. The corsairs were very popular in Dodo

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## DODO ISLAND

Island a century or more ago, for the privateering business paid exceedingly well, and if there was a money risk there were prospects of enormous profits to set against it. It must not be supposed that this privateering business was piracy ; to suggest such a thing would be to cast an unmerited slur upon the names of dead and gone heroes. It is true the objects of pirates and corsairs were identical ; they both lived on plunder. But while the pirate waged war on mankind, and was supposed to kill unresisting people out of sheer lightness of heart, the privateer only robbed the ships of those at war with his country, and did no more killing than was necessary to secure his object. Both corsair and pirate employed the same methods ; they flew the flag which would enable them to get as close as possible to the victim before he realised whom he had to deal with, and then, just to show a taste of their quality, pirate or corsair would pour in a broadside at close quarters, repeat it at short intervals, and then board the trader—if he still resisted—and make short work of him with hand grenades, pistols, boarding-pikes and cutlasses. The privateer had one rather unfair advantage over the pirate, he was provided with Letters of Marque ; so, if he happened to fall in with a vessel of war or get the worst of the struggle with an armed Indiaman, he could not be strung up at the yard-arm, but claimed to be made a prisoner of war. In fact it seems fairly clear that the

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privateer spoilt the pirate's market and drove him out of business.

The chiefest of all the Dodo Island corsairs was Surcouf; the greatest feat he ever accomplished was the capture of the Indiaman *Kent*, and this is a translation of an account of the closing of that business, written only ten years ago by an island chronicler who can be cordially congratulated on the diligence of his research and the attractive style in which he has marshalled his facts. It seems, however, a pity that when the island has been for a century British property, and the people have enjoyed whatever benefits attach to the flag, a historian should use his opportunity and his ability to revive feelings of race animosity; that he should fail to realise that the sentiment of civilised people has long since ceased to see anything particularly admirable in the proceedings of the old privateers, and that he should still be able to find excuses for such an amazing proceeding as the six and a half years imprisonment of Captain Flinders, the explorer, by General Decaen. What I set out to do was to give a translation of Mr. A. Pitot's account of the boarding of the *Kent* by Surcouf and the crew of the *Confiance*; here it is:

"The two ships touch each other, the anchor of the Englishman grapples one of the forward ports of the *Confiance*, and remains fixed there. Surcouf gives the order for boarders, and the first to make use of their anchor, as a bridge to the enemy, are shot down;

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others follow them, the Bourbon Volunteers are in the yards and from there they shower down hand grenades on the English. Profiting by the confusion caused by this attack, Drieux drives the English from the fore-castle, while Surcouf, naked to the waist, an axe in his hand, rushes on and fells a man at every blow. In a moment the bridge is swept clear ; the English, thrown on the top of each other, are crowded on the poop, and have not space in which to fight, it is a veritable massacre. Rivington falls from his watch-post, wounded by a grenade, Surcouf sees it, charges a last time, drives the English head over heels into the battery, cuts the halliard of the flag, which comes down with a run, takes possession of the ship, disarms the prisoners, and throws the dead into the sea. But the second in command of the *Kent*, learning the death of his commander, and desiring to avenge him, aims two guns to blow up the bridge ; the French realise the intention in time, throw themselves into the battery and compel every one to surrender. Surcouf had promised his men an hour's pillage (*part du diable*) if they proved victors, and they gave themselves up to the game with delight. Hearing the cries of women, Surcouf makes inquiries and finds that there are ladies on board : he goes to them, tells them they have nothing to fear, that nothing of theirs shall be touched, but he has promised his men the pillage, and he must keep his word : nevertheless before the hour has elapsed he gives

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orders for the looting to cease. He leaves Drieux on the *Kent*, himself returns to the *Confiance*, hails a three-masted Moorish vessel which, by good luck, happens to be passing, forces all his prisoners to embark thereon, with their luggage, keeps only two officers (to certify to the capture) and all those who are too seriously wounded to be moved, as well as their own surgeons to attend to them.

“The English lost about seventy men ; the French had sixteen wounded, of whom only three died, due no doubt to the suddenness of the attack, and the short time which the engagement lasted. The *Confiance* and the *Kent* set sail together and reached the Ile de France in the month of November.”

The half-naked desperado with his axe, followed by a motley crew, is a familiar figure in the sea stories of one's childhood, not less than the hand grenades, the hour *du part du diable*, the dead thrown into the sea, and the survivors forced on board the Moor's passing vessel. They are all familiar, only this is real and a very amazing feat ; for Surcouf, with a small privateer and a handful of men, captured an Indiaman of 1200 tons with a number of guns, and over 400 men on board. The incident is one of many that were very similar, and it is not surprising that the sufferers at last decided that it was time to put an end to an intolerable state of affairs.

If a story I read of Surcouf is rightly attributed to him he must have been as quick and effective with his



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tongue as with his battle-axe. It is said that an English officer, who had been made prisoner by Surcouf, remarked to his captor, "It appears that the French fight for plunder; while we fight for honour!" "Yes," replied Surcouf, "we each fight for what we have not got."

There is another story of privateering which deserves to be repeated. I give it on the authority of Garneray. A certain privateer commander, named Cousinerie, had been cruising off the East Coast of Africa, in a little brig, called the *Tigre de Bengal*, and had picked up, in the neighbourhood of Zanzibar, a number of shipwrecked Englishmen. These he had taken on board out of sheer compassion, and with no *arrière-pensée*. It seems, however, that in those good old days, virtue was specifically rewarded for, shortly afterwards, when Cousinerie was sailing quietly back to the island, an English corvette hove in sight, and immediately gave chase. The corvette was faster than the brig, and began to overhaul her, when Cousinerie, at his wit's end, suddenly remembered the shipwrecked people. He had them brought on deck, as well as all the empty barrels in the ship. Then he knocked out one end of each barrel, bored two holes in the other end, attached a 12-lb. shot for ballast and, when he thought the corvette was almost within shot, he put two of the shipwrecked Englishmen into a barrel, lowered it over the side and, in spite of their protestations, let them

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drift. He was not unreasonable ; he gave them something to eat, a bottle of brandy, and a pack of cards, and then waited to see what would happen. The involuntary navigators raised heartrending cries, and attracted the attention of the corvette, which had to bring to and pick them up. Cousinerie had gained somewhat : but the chase was renewed and, being pressed, he dropped another couple of his guests overboard, with a similar result. The operation had to be repeated a good many times before night fell, and the privateer made good her escape. When telling the story, on his arrival at the island, Cousinerie is reported to have said, "It was a great pity the darkness came so soon, for the game was really amusing, and I had still six Englishmen and three barrels."

Lord Minto, the Governor-General of India, had lately (1806) conducted a most successful expedition against Java where, as the result of the battle of Fort Cornelis, French and Dutch troops had capitulated and the whole of the Dutch Indies had passed to the British Crown. A much less elaborate expedition was sufficient for the new enterprise and, in December 1810, the British became the masters of Mauritius and have remained in possession ever since. It is practically certain that this action, which was purely one of self-defence, would never have been taken if the good people of Dodo Island had not allowed their attention to be distracted from the cultivation of the sugar cane

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to the more profitable pastime of privateering. England did not want this tiny storm-centre in the Indian Ocean and, since the opening of the Suez Canal, its position on the highway between the Cape of Good Hope and Hindustan has ceased to be a matter of great importance. The island has known many vicissitudes : it has suffered specially from that first of all natural laws, the law of change ; but while it has lost the dodo, lost its slaves, and lost its position as the first stronghold of privateering in the Eastern Seas, one may be permitted to hope that it has not lost by passing from French to British Colonial administration. Many Englishmen have always been fervent admirers of our nearest neighbours, and now that we have happily agreed to regard each other nationally as individual Englishmen have long regarded individual Frenchmen, one need not hesitate to state an opinion, which I have often heard expressed by travelled Frenchmen, namely, that Englishmen have a peculiar aptitude for the administration of alien races in distant parts of the earth. It is just 100 years since we became the owners of Dodo Island, yet he would be a rash man who sought to establish the thesis by that instance. I have no design so serious as to attempt to prove anything, but it goes without saying that the blame for whatever failure there is must rest with us ; the task was not easy but, as we have held the island for longer than the French occupation, we cannot

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plead want of opportunity. That is by the way, and were it otherwise—I mean had all gone well—I should never have seen an island which, if it were not 2000 miles from almost anywhere at all, might be the playground of the whole world, for it is passing lovely. Otherwise too, if matters were more scientifically, more economically, arranged—as in other duller places—many of the mental distractions which appeal most forcibly to the observant would certainly be absent. These, I cannot help thinking, mark the latest phase in that historic cycle, which for us must date from the extinction of the dodo but which, assuredly, had a beginning millions of years earlier, when the island was forced into being from the depths of the ocean by some tremendous convulsion of nature. It is possible that the present phase will pass, like those others which have passed, and that is an excuse, were any needed, for the inevitable camera and the indiscreet snapshot.

I shall not try to describe here the beauties of the island : writers better qualified have called it “Eden,” “Pearl of the Ocean,” and given to it other equally new and equally appropriate names. It is not my idea of Eden for there are too many canes, no fruit at all likely to have tempted Eve, and, if the influence of the serpent is not unknown, he is very seldom seen and fills quite a subordinate rôle.

The island is about the size of the county of Surrey ; in the north, it is flat or slightly undulating, but, in the

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centre and south, there is a tableland of from 600 to 2000 feet above the sea and from it rise several groups of very remarkable peaks. Round this tableland runs a wide fringe of singularly beautiful lowland, which is also broken in places by hills. The whole island is volcanic and a belt of coral encircles the greater part of the coast. Many considerable streams rise in the various hill ranges and, cutting through the deep gorges of the uplands, make their way to the sea. The original forest has been almost entirely destroyed, but the land is exceedingly fertile and, where it is not under a bed of lava (as in the north), or waterless (as in much of the Black River district), it is covered by fields of cane which produce some 200,000 tons of sugar annually. The climate of the uplands, from June to November, would be nearly perfect if there were less rain. In the other six months there are too many mosquitoes and occasionally a severe, perhaps a disastrous, hurricane. This last is sometimes described as a blessing in disguise, for it brings the torrential deluges which quicken the cane-fields into life and strength. The island is  $21^{\circ}$  South of the Equator, and during the most unpleasant months of the year is not so trying, even in the low country, as many tropical places, while the tableland is always bearable. As far as climate is concerned Europeans might live there without change; they would suffer mentally but perhaps not otherwise. The isolation of the

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place is extreme. Besides the great distances, to Africa (Durban) 1550 miles, to Ceylon 2000 miles, to Australia 3100 miles, to Aden 2400 miles, the island is on the way to nowhere and the outer world is vague and unreal. The Mauritians seldom travel and the tendency to insularity, to narrow views and limited conceptions, is almost irresistible ; that is the misfortune of the thinkers and leaders of opinion. Amongst the rank and file there are two besetting sins, a profound laziness and a passionate desire to talk. The laziness of the islander is a crime and often leads to crime ; but the passion to talk is a disease. Great efforts have been made, and enormous expense incurred, to keep out or confine within limits such things as plague, cholera and smallpox, but no quarantine measures, however strict, will reduce the epidemic of loquacity which has a section of the community firmly in its grip. It seems reasonable to suppose that the energies which would naturally be devoted to the performance of public duties or to personal support, are, in many cases, consumed by this devouring fire of speech. There is no other means of accounting for the remarkable lack of initiative, of independence, and of enterprise which characterises so large a proportion of the inhabitants of the island, so that it seems to strangers (and not to strangers alone) as though their whole scheme of existence was confined to doing nothing themselves but demanding,

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vigorously and often, that the Government should supply them with everything from a free birth certificate to a free funeral, and that the intermediate stages should be made as comfortable as possible, by the thoughtful care of the same all-dispensing authority. I hope I may be given some credit for the use of the word "inhabitants," I could not say "working classes" for that would be a misnomer perilously near to an insult, and then I was careful not to say "lower classes," while "inhabitants" does not discriminate too nicely and could never include any reader of these pages.

If I have taken these questions of loquacity and laziness rather earlier and more seriously than I intended it is because of their importance, because the atmosphere of the island is saturated with them, and because the reader cannot understand the rest until he has a real appreciation of these primary considerations.

A railway and an unusual number of generally excellent roads give easy access to every part of the island. The railway was built forty years ago, and its needs have been sacrificed to other exigencies, so that it is only by good management that it keeps going as well as it does. The best means of getting about is a motor; the air is delightful, the views enchanting, and life on the road is seldom dull. One realises quickly the truth of the saying, "it is the pace that kills," if you motor often through Port Louis and the more populous centres. You will, at

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first, be in constant dread of killing some one or something ; but that wears off, and is followed by a feeling of curiosity as to the bag you are likely to make. Old women of all colours and in every stage of decrepitude ; dogs that are often quite unlike dogs, so emaciated are they and so hairless ; goats, children, geese, fowls and chickens—the road is littered with them ; the escapes are miraculous and the miracle does not always happen. I have never seen a place so empty of cats and so full of idiotic dogs. In Mauritius there are laws for everything conceivable and inconceivable, and, of course, there are laws dealing with the destruction of stray ownerless dogs ; but the people whose duty it is to destroy, shirk the task and leave it to the passing motor, which seldom kills outright ; that, I suppose, is why one sees, on the roads, almost as many limping dogs as crippled people. It is very distressing, but no one seems to mind—it is the business of the Government. If many of the dogs are idiots, a large proportion of the fowls are determined suicides. They are quite out of danger ; then, when the car is very close, they look up, run two yards away, turn round, run back——. Often they get up just when the car is passing, fly alongside for a moment and then, deliberately, in front. Instinctively I used to look back, but so seldom was there any sign, any debris, that I wondered whether the chauffeur had a net under the car and collected all his victims, as the postal van

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of a train used to spread its net and collect letter bags as it passed remote places at full speed. Once or twice, it is true, I saw through the dust a struggling bundle of feathers, with a crowd of all ages and both sexes making for the spot at top speed. I fancy these spoils of the chase are to the first comer.

Another common sight on the road is the happy convict. He works—no, I do not mean that, he does not work, nor does he play. He sits, absorbed in thought; he trifles with a stone, toys with a hoe, or dandles a basket; sometimes he shelters himself from rain under a tree, or beneath a cart—which stops obligingly for the purpose. More often he is seen reclining on some shady bank, eating a hot meal brought from what is called in the island “the King’s Hotel,” while, at a little distance, there is a person, wearing a straw hat and nondescript garments, who is also taking his luncheon. A rifle of some sort, probably not loaded and certainly not intended for use, lies near him and proclaims his calling; he is a prison warder. Prison life in Mauritius is so attractive that the warder is really as useless as he seems to be. Any one of this gang of convicts might walk into the adjoining cane-fields and disappear; but that would be to exchange a life of luxury, excellent food, good lodging, good clothes, medical attendance, good company, ghostly advice and just enough exercise to give a good appetite—for what? For “the daily

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round, the common task," the individual struggle for existence which as a self-respecting creole he will not undertake. When you see the system at work and are told that the oft-convicted thief, who has just been given a month or six weeks, says to the Magistrate from the dock, "Why do you give me the trouble of coming here so often, why can't you make it a year or two at once?" you express no surprise. You are perhaps amused and say to yourself, "*autres pays, autres mœurs*, no doubt every one is satisfied." Nothing of the kind, every one is being robbed; one class of their jewels and their plate, another of their cabbages and potatoes; the air is full of the exceeding bitter cry of their lamentation, and there are even suggestions that the Police and the thieves are in league. To show your interest and sympathy you suggest a rather sterner discipline, a little corporal punishment, as a wholesome corrective to a too luxurious prison diet. The horror with which your proposal is received may cause you a mild surprise if you remember a story of your childhood about a *cordonnier* whose wife was always saying, "*le Roi dit à la Reine—la Reine dit au Roi*," until the good man could bear it no longer and administered correction with the simple admonition, "*Ne melez-vous pas dans les affaires d'état*." I am always being told that barbarous England is the only country where corporal punishment is applied, either to schoolboys or criminals, but in the case of this story

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“the country of origin” was not England. A hundred and fifty years ago, in the island of which I write, it was not uncommon to rack accused persons, to break on the wheel those convicted of great crimes and even to crucify them. Now, capital punishment has gone out of fashion so completely that, while murder is still common, there has not been an execution for years.

The population of the island is nearly 380,000, the birth-rate is unusually high, the average life is fairly long and there is—very naturally—a strong objection to emigration. The objection arises from a suspicion that, in other places, things are done in another way ; that there are Governments which, when asked for bread, not only give a stone but compel you to break it. So it is better to stay where there are the priceless treasures of a history which includes the dodo and the heroic deeds of the good old days. Still one may get hungry on studious musing and, if the legends of a rather remote antiquity satisfy one's pride, they do not fill the belly. It is evident that however generous a Government may be, however much it may desire to do the will of the people for the people, it may yet find it impossible, in such a small place, with such a comparatively large population, to provide prison accommodation and entertainment for all those who desire a course of this treatment. The Government of Mauritius has therefore arranged to meet the demand,

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or part of it, by providing an officer, called the Poor Law Authority, whose duty it is to give money, or food, or both, to all those who plead that they are really in want. Although this relief is inferior to that supplied by the Prison Authorities, it is surprising how many people take advantage of it. This dispensation of public charity costs nearly 200,000 rupees annually; but the buildings suffer by comparison with those of the neighbouring prison, and they are not large enough to accommodate more than a very small proportion of those who are relieved by allowances in money or kind. It is regrettable to find that complaints are not uncommon, both as to the inadequacy of the doles and the indifferent quality of the supplies.

I mentioned the curious absence of cats, and it is therefore needless to say that rats abound. Of course the rats have a prescriptive right of occupation, for their numbers surprised the Dutch when they first visited the island quite a long time ago. It may be assumed that there is no objection to the cat *qua* cat, but that there is a prejudice against doing anything to disturb the rat, or interfere with the quiet enjoyment of his recognised rights. A vigorous cat *versus* rat campaign might influence the rainfall (the removal of dead timber from the forests was prohibited lest it should have that effect), but whatever the reason, a cat is seldom seen, and the majority of the "road" dogs would be no match for a good rat. So there are plenty

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of rats, and also plenty of plague cases, and again, as in the case of prædial larceny, you suppose that every one is happy. Not at all, every one is unhappy except the members of the Government Medical Department. Officially, these gentlemen are at war with the rats. Their mercenaries are old campaigners ; they are not going to take the bread out of their own mouths by organising pitched battles, or large sweeping movements, or even by letting out a few cat-corsairs to harass the enemy. That would be absurd for, now that plague is well established, the real fear is lest it should die of inanition. No violent measure is likely to kill it, but there is serious danger of death from natural causes, and that would be a real calamity for a considerable proportion of the population. Government servants might be thrown out of active employment and have to be placed on the already lengthy list of pensioners. In Mauritius the conditions of life are so unfair that one is never given a free choice between good and bad ; it is almost always a choice of evils, and the absence of plague would be only the beginning of genteel poverty to a number of people in whom a number of others feel they are obliged to be interested. "One must suffer to be beautiful"—or rather to retain beauty—and in a Colony where matters are arranged on that basis, one must pay taxes that all the members of a growing family may live. The really disagreeable part of it is that strangers come and blurt out tactlessly the

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thing that is. I remember hearing a youthful Scotchman say : "There's one thing a Scotchman canna stand and that's an Englishman tryin' ta tell a Scotch story."

The congenital laziness of the Creole is accepted so universally in the island that I never heard it disputed. Personally it seemed to me that there is a small class which shows a very exceptional energy ; I refer to the journalists. What I saw may have been a temporary effort ; there was, however, nothing to suggest that, and even if it were so the effort was astonishing. This colony has more newspapers than any place of its size or importance that I have met with or heard of. There are five morning and two evening dailies, all in French, except one which is half in French and half in English. There is also a Sunday paper in French. During a recent inquiry the evening papers appeared every afternoon, at 4 o'clock, with columns and columns of fairly correct reports of evidence of witnesses carrying the reader to about 3 o'clock in the examination. When I say the proceedings were often highly technical, and carried on in English for the most part, this was a feat of which any newspaper might be proud. I was also struck by the fact that none of the papers claimed any special credit for this *tour de force*. Of course the morning papers published a full account of the progress of the inquiry and of course some of the accounts were more accurate than others. To a stranger the number

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of newspapers must be accounted for in this way : first there is nothing else to read ; for, in spite of a claim to literary tastes and rather high literary abilities, there is not one book-shop in the island. A man may tell you he has a voracious appetite, but if he seldom or never eats it is reasonable to suppose that he is mistaken, and you will not be deceived if he tells you that there is a local source of supply from which he can borrow, and that he gets his meat through the post, which arrives sometimes once a fortnight and sometimes once in a month. No, he is fascinated by the newspaper—on which there is no postage to pay—and small blame to him. That brings me to the second and third reasons which stand in the relationship of cause and effect. The higher life of the place is not literature but politics—politics of course on a scale suited to the island and its traditions—and every politician who, like Virginius, feels that he has a special call to “pour thick and fast the burning words that tyrants dread to hear,” has a newspaper. The climate is sometimes against out-door performances, and to talk in print is to have the satisfaction of reading it yourself, while you never experience the deadly disappointment of finding that the audience has forgotten or neglected your invitation. When one considers how many politicians there are in Mauritius, of all classes, colours and nationalities, one is only surprised at the greatness of their self-denial—in newspapers. That is reason

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number two, and the third is the attraction of the "copy," by virtue of the fact that whenever a politician (or his editor, I really think it is the editor) tires of shaking his tongue at the tyrant, he lashes himself into a white heat of passion over the doings, and the sayings, and the ancestry of his political opponent. It makes excellent reading, and I take this opportunity of expressing my sincere thanks to the press for the entertainment they furnished so punctually every morning and almost every evening. Until I read those papers I did not know what journalism was, and I confess, to my shame, that I was not aware that any European language was capable of being made so expressive as I found French to be in the words of writers in the ————. No, that would be unfair; there are distinctions in my own mind, but I am not going to advertise a literary production as writers on cookery and dress advertise Hotels and Costumiers. If some of the gentlemen whose articles I used to read with keen delight could only find a wider field (I do not say a worthier, only wider) I feel confident that they would soon establish in the European capitals a demand which only this island (and perhaps its nearest neighbour, but I am not sure of that) could supply. Here would be a new industry, a new career, bringing some profit to the sons of the island and shedding new lustre on its arms—the coat of arms I mean.

The reader will now understand that I was not

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demented when I wrote of colour and ancestry ; the courage to mention such things came to me after a long course of Mauritius newspapers, supported by the freedom with which these questions are discussed in any conversation. I do not know whether there is a private inquiry office, or whether all particulars are supplied (free of cost, of course) by the Civil Status Department, but the sleuth-hound persistence with which a practised writer will pick up and pursue the "trail of the ancestor," as far as it will go, and the deadly skill with which he will analyse the colour and character of every departed member of the family, where they came from and what they did in this world, with a strong suspicion of what they may be doing in the next, has so far as I know no parallel. Of course, I speak with very limited knowledge, and it must not be supposed that, in my desire to give the Mauritian journalist the credit he deserves, I have any intention of detracting from the claims of others, in other countries, who have the same gift. I am sorely tempted to give some examples of this art, but that would not be fair : for, if you deprive this kind of writing of the atmosphere in which it breathes, the local colour which gives it a tone and *cachet* of its own, there would remain nothing but lifeless bones, a very mummy of the body beautiful. The genius which can invent invective of such a type that, when seen in print, the words look like strange and deadly missiles just hurled from a catapult, can, when

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prejudice is absent, write able and thoughtful articles, well argued and well expressed. Whatever I have said is common knowledge, but there is a strong prejudice against the man who says out loud that he has seen something, the existence of which the rest of the community, by a conspiracy of silence or from pure lack of interest, have decided to ignore. If any eye is offended by what I have written, let the owner remember that an obstacle lying in the road cannot be removed by saying it is not there, and, if those who have stumbled over it all their lives, decide not to mind, a stranger may still be hurt.

I have said somewhere that Mauritius produces a large quantity of sugar ; that is when Providence sends neither hurricane, nor drought, nor other scourge, but just a fair amount of rain. The figures of production would not convey the impression I seek to give, it is that the whole island, and every one in it, depend almost entirely on this industry. Barring the unforeseen, fair land and a good sugar mill, intelligently directed, give a very satisfactory return to those who work with their own money. In the matter of good mills, with machinery of a high order, and especially in her planters, Mauritius has a great asset. Besides being courteous, sympathetic, hospitable gentlemen, fond of sport and good to their labourers, most of the Mauritius planters—I cannot say all only because I do not know all—are highly intelligent men of experience and capacity.

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The state of the sugar factories proves their energy and self-sacrifice in the past, and their continuing desire to keep abreast of the times. It is well that some of them take an interest in public affairs, for every colony should have the help of its best men, and, if the ablest of these are right in thinking—and even more right in having the courage to say—that the island is troubled by too much politics, it can only be wise to set other men's minds in the same direction.

I might wish to leave Dodo Island here, but I cannot without referring to one other characteristic, and that is the absence of at least half the sense of humour: the half which enables you to realise what you are doing when you make yourself ridiculous. It is true that this deficiency is so common in really great men that, for them, the power to appreciate humour, at their own expense, is almost an impossibility. Very often they are quick to see the humour of any situation in which they have only a vicarious interest, but where will you find a really great monarch or statesman, beauty or divine, a soldier, singer, actor or explorer who possesses more than half the sense of humour? I do not pretend that the want of half, or even the whole, of this faculty will make a great statesman; still less do I pretend that the fullest enjoyment of the sense would make any one great; but the fact remains that the greater the man the more certain is it that he cannot appreciate the

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humour of his own actions, his own speeches, his own demeanour, when some day he may have cut a sorry figure. If the proposition is true in the case of individuals, it is more striking and less excusable when a community is similarly affected.

That appears to be the case in Mauritius, and if the spectator gathers a wrong impression, the fault is not with him. It is fair to draw conclusions from the obvious, though one may envy the comfortable contentment which puts aside criticism as an error of taste on the part of the critic. One day, in conversation with a leading Mauritian, I advanced these views in regard to what struck me as a curious absence of the sense of humour in regard to local affairs. My companion did not agree, and asked me for an instance in support of the opinion I had expressed. I took out of my pocket a newspaper cutting and showed it to him. He glanced at it and returned it saying, "Do you see any humour in that?"

I said, "Yes, a great deal. Have you read it?"

He replied, "I have."

"And you know that it is perfectly true?"

"I know it."

"Well," I said, "I can't at the moment remember having ever read anything at all like it, or half so amusing. Do you really mean that you cannot see the humour of this authentic and unquestioned account of facts?"

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Then he said, "Yes, I can, but I do not wish to admit it."

With that he did not so much as smile.

I have translated the statement—it deserves a wider publicity than it is likely to get by publication in the paper from which I took it—and the reader can judge for himself as to the humour of it. I feel sure that the accused, who for twelve months had been waiting for their trial as receivers of stolen property, and who, for all I know, may be waiting still, saw no humour in the situation, but I expect they have opinions and could express them forcibly—in Chinese.

### TRANSLATION OF OFFICIAL DOSSIER

The case of *Sergt. Lapierre v. Li Lu Pin* and others.

Cause entered 27 August, 1908—Case fixed for hearing on 2 Sept. 1908.

2 Sept. 1908. *Sergt. Lapierre* produces an order of the *Procureur Général* to the effect that the case is to be heard by the Bench Court of Port Louis. The case is fixed to be brought before the Bench at noon.

Noon. The three accused are present. The case is postponed to 28 Sept. 1908.

28 Sept. 1908. Before the Magistrates *Hugues, Hewetson* and *Esnouf*.

The magistrates having sat in the principal case of theft and this being a charge against the receivers the

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three magistrates excuse themselves. The case is postponed *pro formâ* to the 7 Oct. 1908 to await the reply of the Governor to the request of the magistrates to be allowed to withdraw.

7 Oct. 1908. No reply having yet been received from the Governor to the request of the three magistrates to be allowed to withdraw the case is postponed to 14 Oct. 1908.

14 Oct. 1908. No reply—postponed to 21 Oct.

21 Oct. 1908. No reply—postponed to 4 Nov.

4 Nov. 1908. No reply—postponed to 2 Dec.

2 Dec. 1908. No reply—postponed to 16 Dec.

16 Dec. 1908. No reply—postponed to 13 Jany. 1909.

13 Jany. 1909. No reply—postponed to 3 Feby. 1909.

15 Jany. 1909. Received and annexed a letter from the Honble. the Colonial Secretary No. 266/09 dated 14 Jany. 1909 informing the three magistrates that their request to retire from the case has been granted.

(Sd.) A. HUGUES.

20 Jany. 1909. The two magistrates of the Oil Islands being available and qualified to sit the clerk of the district draws lots in my presence in order to see which of the two must sit and the lot falls upon Mr. S. Fouquereaux.

The clerk of the district then draws lots amongst all the district magistrates of the island in order to

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choose two to replace the two other magistrates withdrawn and the lot falls upon Mr. F. Robert, Magistrate of Rivière du Rempart, and Mr. G. Rochery, Magistrate of Savane.

An order is given to the clerk to write to the three magistrates drawn by lot to the effect that the case will be taken on the 3d of Feb. 1909.

(Sd.) A. HUGUES,  
*Magistrate.*

3 Feb. 1909. Before a Bench composed of Messrs. Robert, Fouquereaux and Rochery.

The Prosecutor and the Accused are present—

Mr. Ernest Leclézio appears for the accused No. 1.

Mr. Amand Esnouf for the accused Nos. 2 & 3—  
the case is postponed to Feb. 24—the witnesses to be informed.

On the 9th Feb. 1909 an order is given to the clerk of the district to write to Mr. Yves Jollivet, Magistrate of the Oil Islands, to the effect that Mr. Fouquereaux, a member of the Bench, in virtue of his duties as a magistrate of the Oil Islands, and being now available, must according to law replace him.

(Sd.) A. HUGUES,  
*Magistrate of the 1st Division, Pt. Louis.*

Feb. 24. Before the Bench composed of Messrs. Robert, Rochery and Jollivet.

The parties are present in Court.

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Mr. Leclézio for accused No. 1. Mr. Esnouf for accused Nos. 2 and 3.

At the request of Mr. Esnouf who is indisposed the case is postponed to March 3, 1909.

March 3, 1909. Before the Bench composed of Messrs. Robert, Rochery and Jollivet.

Messrs. Esnouf and Leclézio raise a preliminary objection that the Bench is not legally constituted.

Mr. Jollivet is not qualified to sit, Magistrate Hugues has chosen him arbitrarily; whereas, according to law, he ought to have instructed the clerk to draw lots between the two magistrates of the Oil Islands, Messrs. Le Conte and Jollivet, and not to have written to the latter; Mr. Hugues cannot determine which magistrate shall sit.

The Court reserves judgment and the case is postponed to March 10.

March 10, 1909. Before Messrs. Jollivet, Rochery and Robert.

The Bench by a majority (Messrs. Jollivet and Rochery) decides that the Bench is not legally constituted and that Mr. Jollivet is not qualified to sit.

Mr. Robert differs from his colleagues and decides that the Bench is properly constituted.

The three magistrates then retire.

April 19, 1909. Received and annexed a letter from



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the Procureur-Général No. L, 1444-08 instructing me to do what is necessary for the nomination of a 3d magistrate to replace Mr. Jollivet who is declared unqualified. The clerk of the district is instructed to write to Magistrate Le Conte, the other magistrate of the Oil Islands who is nominated to sit.

At the request of Messrs. Esnouf and Leclézio the case is fixed for hearing on May 5.

(Sd.) A. HUGUES.

May 3d. Received and attached to the dossier a letter from the Colonial Secretary informing me that Mr. Le Conte is excused because, whilst he was at the Parquet, he had already inquired into this case (Letter No. 388-09) and further that the excuse has been accepted by the Governor.

The clerk of the district again draws lots and the lot falls on Mr. Léon Leclézio, Magistrate of Rose Hill.

(Sd.) A. HUGUES.

May 5. Messrs. Robert and Rochery are present alone.

A telegram from Mr. Léon Leclézio is annexed.

At the request of Messrs. Esnouf and Leclézio the case is fixed for May 26.

May 26. Before Messrs. Robert, Rochery and Leclézio. Messrs. Esnouf and Leclézio plead that that the Bench is not legally constituted.

Mr. Léon Leclézio is not qualified to sit. The

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Colonial Secretary in his letter did not specify what was the case for which Mr. Le Conte's excuse had been accepted and, until that point is settled, Mr. Leclézio is not qualified to sit.

The Court reserves judgment and the case is postponed until June 8.

June 8, 1909. Before Messrs. Robert, Rochery and Léon Leclézio. The Court decides in favour of the objection raised by the defence.

Sub-Inspector Ross asks to be allowed to prove that the Colonial Secretary's letter (No. 388-09) really referred to the present case.

Messrs. Esnouf and Leclézio protest against any such pretension.

The Court allows the proof which is duly made and the case is fixed for June 23d.

June 23. Magistrate Robert being ill, the case is postponed until July 7.

July 7. Mr. Ernest Leclézio being ill the case is postponed until July 28.

July 28. Magistrate Rochery being ill the case is postponed until Aug. 14.

Aug. 14. Magistrate Robert being ill and having asked for leave of absence the case is postponed until Sept. 8 *pro formâ* in order to see which magistrate will be nominated to fill his post at Flacq and what measures will be taken to replace him on the Bench Court.

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That is the singular case of Li Lu Pin and others which, after being for more than a year before the Court, arrived at the stage described in the last words of the *dossier*. Apparently Li Lu Pin and his friends were never charged, and though they, and perhaps the witnesses, must have been in attendance about twenty times not a word of evidence was ever heard. It would not be fair to instance this case as an example of how justice is administered in Mauritius, but it gives one furiously to think, especially when the leading member of the local Bar declines to see any humour in the proceedings.

It is possible that any one who reads this statement of dry facts might at once look about for a heap of stones in his desire to throw something at the Government. No doubt the Government is responsible, but really it is the system which is to blame and, in Mauritius, there is a strong feeling that no one should lay violent hands on the system.

Every cog of every wheel in the complicated machine of State has been placed there by Law ; the dignity of the Law overshadows it all, providing for everything and justifying everything. I venture to say this present phase, which has already lasted a long time, may pass. There are Mauritians who can see as well as other people and they will, sooner or later, decline to live fifty years behind the rest of the world, even though that should mean breaking with some

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worn-out old traditions which never had anything greatly to recommend them. If I have criticised the system, in the light of some of the results it has produced, I can adopt the popular phrase and say "that is the affair of the Government." That the Mauritians are responsible for the system—or a great deal of it—is proved by their strong objection to measures which have given excellent results elsewhere. "The affair of the Government" is that the authorities have not enforced what, out of their large experience, they knew would be right and in the best interests of the Colony. I have criticised to help, not to hurt, and I count it my good fortune that I was privileged to see such an enchanting island and to meet there so many Mauritians for whom I have a great admiration. I earnestly hope, and I believe, that they are entering upon a new era of prosperity which will continue and serve to blot out the memory of past disasters and misfortunes.

## LE RÉDUIT

**H**AVE you ever seen an inland peninsula ? It is unlikely, unless you have visited Mauritius and know the one I am looking at. Let me try to describe it. Eight hundred feet above the sea, two very deep ravines gradually converge, and the spectator, who has wandered along the inner edge of either, suddenly finds himself in the air. That, at any rate, is the impression given to me when, after a long walk beside the ravine on my left, I find I am on a very narrow neck of land, with a similar ravine on my right. Passing through an avenue of rustling bamboos, with great fat green and yellow stems, further progress is impossible. On every side, except the one by which I have come, the ground falls sheer down, down, down, and I am left on what is called *le bout du monde*, to gaze in delight on a scene of singular beauty, and the difficulty is to know where to begin in order to convey to the reader any just conception of the pictures to right and left, in front, below.

It is a glorious morning ; the air is full of sunshine after heavy rain ; a delicious breeze is blowing through

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the bamboos ; the temperature is that of a perfect day on the Riviera. I stand at the point where the two ravines meet, and the two streams, which wind along their rocky beds in the cleft of either ravine, unite and pursue their course through a gorge to the sea, distant, as the crow flies, about seven or eight miles. The stream on my right is *Rivière profonde*, that on my left *Rivière cascade*, by reason of a fall of one hundred and twenty feet, higher up and out of sight. Well within view are two much smaller but considerable cascades, and the noise of the falling water fills the air with soothing and slumberous murmur. The combined streams, from their confluence to the sea, are called Grande Rivière.

From "the end of the world," that point whence further progress is barred—except for those with wings—to the surface of the stream is about four hundred feet, and, as I have said, the ground falls sheer to the water. These ravines form a very remarkable feature in this island. In a more or less level upland, covered with fertile soil and tropical foliage, one comes suddenly upon these clefts, from two hundred to a thousand feet deep, the rocky sides are so steep that if they were not almost hidden by small trees growing on such soil as they can find, and by a thick tangle of undergrowth, it would be impossible to climb down or up them. The Réduit ravines are not parallel, they wind towards each other and, from my point of view

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—where two merge into one—that deep gorge zig-zagging, in alternate buttresses of light and shadow, to a cobalt sea, is the most striking feature in the picture.

From edge to edge the gorge is about six hundred yards across, the steep sides are covered with foliage, and where they meet in an acute angle the Grande Rivière dashes through them in a series of rapids. In that green space between the walls of the gorge, some pure white sea-birds are circling, and when in their flight they leave the shadows of the eastern slopes the sunlight turns their feathers to silver. The gorge does not wind in gentle curves like the ravines, but zigzags in straight reaches with sharp angles ; now to left and now to right, giving that suggestion of vast green buttresses, but always leaving a narrow vista of low country, of distant shore, of the “measureless expanse” of blue ocean.

But the sky is blue also, and seen through the bamboo fronds I would swear that it is matchless, and the white clouds, moving slowly across the great spaces, only intensify the colour of their background.

A slight turn of the head to the right and the eye, passing over a narrow stretch of fields of sugar cane, rests on a range of rocky mountains, curving northward. A more picturesque outline than is formed by these sharp peaks it would be difficult to find. Most, if not all, look quite inaccessible ; a few trees and shrubs cling in places to those inhospitable rocks, but

## ALSO AND PERHAPS

the whole mass of jagged points and precipices bears testimony to a time of bitter throes and suggests the recurrence of upheaval and appalling catastrophe.

Beyond this curving stretch of fantastic peaks, but more to the east and much further distant, is another isolated mass of rock. Distance softens the sense of almost cruel sterility, but the outline is even more picturesque, for the four points which spring from the mass and stand against the sky are much higher and the last is the famous Pieter Both, a cone of rock narrowing to a neck supporting the semblance of a head wearing a crown.

To the left, across other fields of cane, at a greater distance but on much the same level as the eastern range of hills, there stands a mass of rock in some respects even more remarkable. It is quite isolated, of vast proportions, and I cannot get away from the impression that it resembles a gigantic Sphinx, something which might easily have suggested—to one who had seen it—that other Sphinx watching in the desert, open-eyed but unseeing, because it looks into the past.

The head of this Sphinx is set towards the east, and the curious thing about it is that the features (if one may use the word) and head-covering are Egyptian.

This mass of rock is called *le corps de garde*, because on the western slope there appears to rest the recumbent figure of a man, with arms crossed, body stretched and rigid, and toes turned straight up ; just



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what may be seen on an ancient tombstone. The figure is singularly perfect in this resemblance ; it lies in such a position that the whole profile, from head to feet, has the sky as background, and, after dark, the soldier sleeps facing the evening star. The proportions are gigantic, but even so, on the mass of the mountain which represents in its entirety the couchant Sphinx, this figure is a comparatively insignificant detail. Along the top of the hill, which must be 2500 feet in height, there is, in places, a little grass ; then there are straight precipices of bare rock reaching halfway down the height, while the lower half falls in steep slopes from the base of the rock to the cane-fields. The space of canes is wide but, seen across the ravine, they make a narrow line of palest green, broken by fronds of the bamboos which line the further edge. Just below the bamboos one sees the rich soil ; it is exactly the colour of chocolate, and the illusion is so complete that it looks as though one might, with a very long arm, reach across the intervening space to take a handful of the stuff and eat it.

From "the end of the world" to the waterfall is about a mile ; a mile of paths and grass rides through woods and by the edge of the ravine. The paths wind about in what is called the French garden ; a place of flowering trees and many palms clothing the sides of a little valley through which wanders a stream, held up in places to form pools of water which

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are broken by islands of gigantic lilies; while clumps of poinsettia, with the largest and most brilliant crimson bracts, overhang and are mirrored in the quiet pools. It is all enchanting, for there is only enough of art to enable one to see nature easily.

Between the two ravines there is a domain of about three hundred acres and about a quarter of a mile back from *le bout du monde* stands the house, Le Réduit, of which I have tried to describe the surroundings. It is an excellent example of what a house in a tropical climate should be. The plan is exceedingly simple; one very long sitting room, with many windows on both sides and a wide verandah along the whole length. At one end of this room, and at right angles to it, is a large dining-room, and at the other a morning-room and a study. There are a number of bedrooms in an upper storey. The house is built of stone and the roof is made of red shingles. There are gardens and lawns all round the house, and a great stretch of green sward from the wide front verandah down towards the gorge. Standing in front of the house and facing the sea, the hills of Moka are on the right and the Sphinx on the left; but the ravines, which also lie to right and left and enclose the domain, are quite invisible. They are really very near, they border the garden on either side, but there is nothing to indicate their existence. The hills are wonderful, strange, and even awesome, but the ravines

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startle by their unexpectedness almost as much as they impress by their beauty. The real wonder of the place is only fully realised when one looks across a ravine to the lovely but sombre hills beyond.

Le Réduit was built in 1749 by Monsieur Barthélemy David, then Governor of the island. The origin of the place is interesting, and the following is a translation of the account of it. "M. David, according to the gossips, professed a boundless admiration for the fair sex ; it was his only fault, if it is a fault. It is recorded that, bewitched by the beauty of a lovely lady of the neighbourhood, he discovered on the borders of Moka and Plaines Wilhems, at the junction of three streams, a charming and retired spot, where he dreamed that he could hide his love-affairs, and to which he gave the significant name *Bout du Monde*. There he built Le Réduit ; being a discreet lover, careful of appearances, he caused it to be noised abroad that ladies would find there safe asylum if the Colony was ever surprised by the English. To this end—unless indeed, it were to relieve himself from the attentions of the inquisitive—he gave to his new residence the appearance of a stronghold, with moat and drawbridge, battlements and barbican. It would have taken a clever enemy to get inside," says the historian, "and the jealous husband would have been non-plussed in the face of twelve or fifteen feet of water."

In 1776 M. le Chevalier Antoine de Guiran La

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Brillane was Governor, and there is an anecdote of his residence at Le Réduit, which may be described as spicy in more senses than one. One evening he was entertaining a large party at dinner, and on his left was sitting a beautiful lady of ample proportions, "*décolletée*"—in the words of the chronicle—"outrageusement."

It was then the custom of the host to help the soup; the lady in question was served first, but the soup was highly seasoned and she was seized with such a violent fit of coughing that she coughed part of herself out of her corsage. The Governor, "*ne perdant pas la tête*"—again the words of the chronicle—and rising to the emergency, by a deft use of the ladle, re-adjusted the lady and then, "*avec un flegme imperturbable*"—still the chronicle—continued the service of soup to the other guests. The narrator of this incident, with a nice appreciation of cause and effect, styles this soup *potage révolutionnaire* and, when it appears on the *menu*, it may be well for ladies to remember that the soup ladle has been banished to the sideboard.

Moat and drawbridge have gone, and there is nothing remarkable about the house of to-day beyond the fact that it fits the place; but in the dining-room hang some portraits of distinguished past Governors of the island, both French and English. There is an Englishman who is supposed to have been poisoned, and there seems to be an attractive mystery there; but one is on

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firmer ground with the portrait of le Comte de Malartic, a soldier who had fought with much distinction in Canada, and who came to be Governor of the island in 1792. Those were stirring times, and though Malartic was over sixty years of age when he arrived in this far distant capital of French power in the East, he was not allowed to hold his position in peace and ease, but was called upon to decide issues which have made his name as much an object of reverence and admiration as that of La Bourdonnais. The probability is that Malartic lived generally in another house, in the centre of that crater of an extinct volcano which forms the chief town of the island, but I like to think that it may have been in these woods and gardens of Réduit that he entertained a foreign guest under circumstances that could hardly arise in these prosaic days. Some time during the last years of the eighteenth century an English fleet was blockading the ports of Ile de France when it became known to the Comte de Malartic that, on board one of the blockading frigates, there was a young English lady who, after a long and trying sea voyage, had lately become a mother, and was now exposed to all the dangers of war. This lady was the wife of the Commander of the frigate, and it is recorded that Malartic, knowing how impossible it was to obtain, upon a vessel of war, such simple necessities as fruit, milk and vegetables, took measures to supply them. He wrote, at the same

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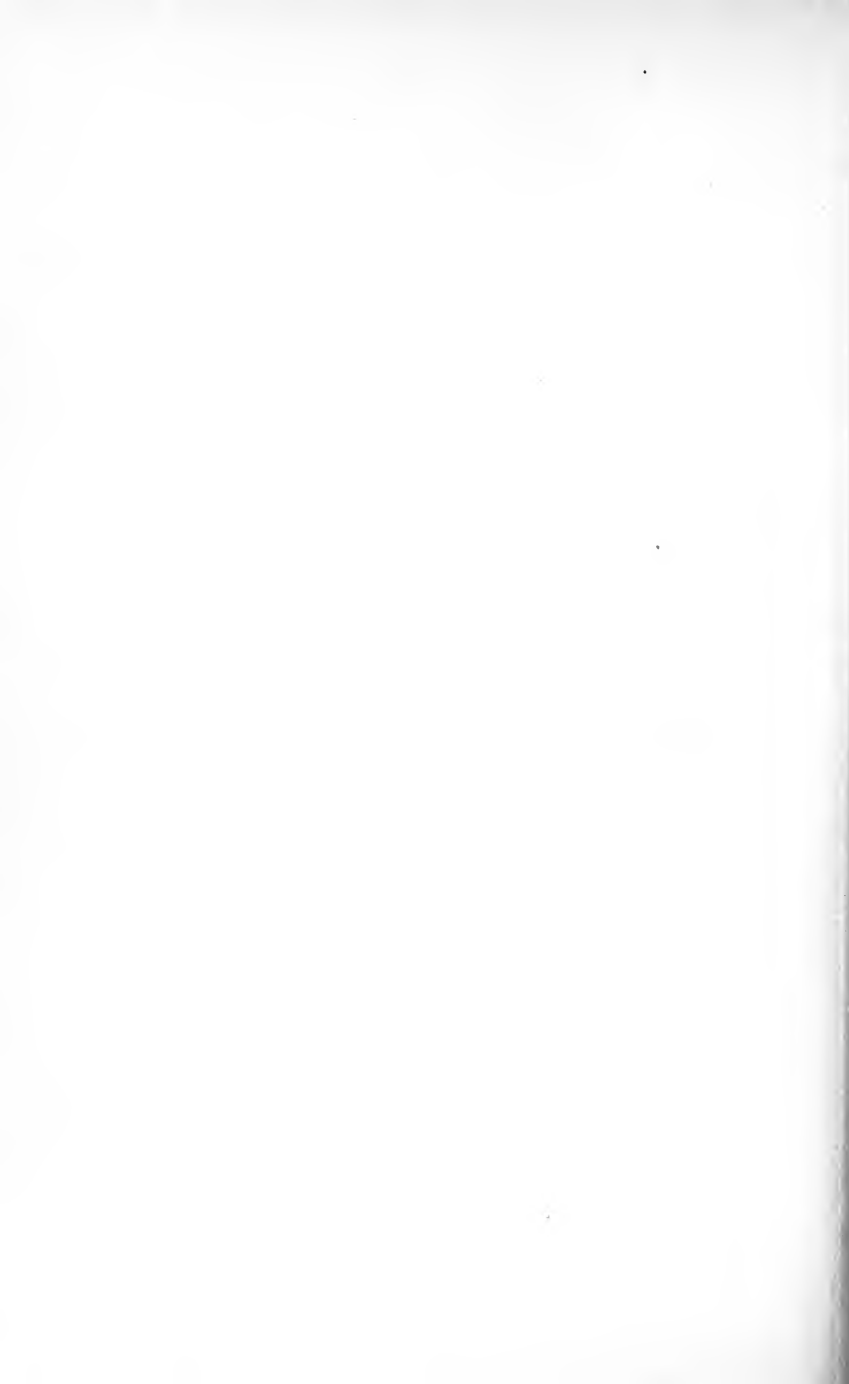
time, expressing his concern and sympathy, and offered to the lady the hospitality of his own house and all the attention that a residence there would secure for her. This chivalrous offer was gratefully accepted; the lady went ashore in a boat sent by the Comte, and she remained his honoured guest until her strength was restored, when she returned to the frigate. The visit was repeated more than once, and the lady appeared at the theatre in the box of the Governor-General, to the surprise and displeasure of some who could not understand such courtesies to the wife of an enemy. It is not clear, from such chronicles as exist, how long it was after these events that the island lost its guiding spirit, but, on the morning of July 23, 1800, Malartic, preparing to attend an early mass, was seized by a fit of apoplexy and died. His body was embalmed and clothed in General's uniform, and when the last honours were rendered to the dead, in the presence of a great company comprising people of every degree, the British warships lying off the shore rendered their tribute of respect for the departed soldier and statesman by flying their flags at half-mast, crossing their yards, and firing minute guns as the funeral *cortége* passed from the chapel in which the body had lain to the place of burial, in the centre of the Champ de Mars.

Hyppolite Maurès, Comte de Malartic, General in the Army of France and Governor General of the French possessions east of the Cape of Good Hope, was  
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buried in a vault in the stretch of land which lies close under the semicircle of hills behind the town of Port Louis, and the monument erected over him bears a long and formal inscription instead of the few simple words originally intended to be placed upon it.

Malartic was a great man and greatly beloved, but neither the people of his time, for whom he had done so much, nor his countrymen in after years, had sufficient regard for his memory to complete the monument over his grave. That work remained unfinished until nearly fifty years later, when it was at last accomplished, mainly with funds raised by the exertions of an English lady, who in this way did what was possible to repay the debt of all her countrywomen to a gallant French gentleman.





## TAMARIN AND ILE DE LA PASSE

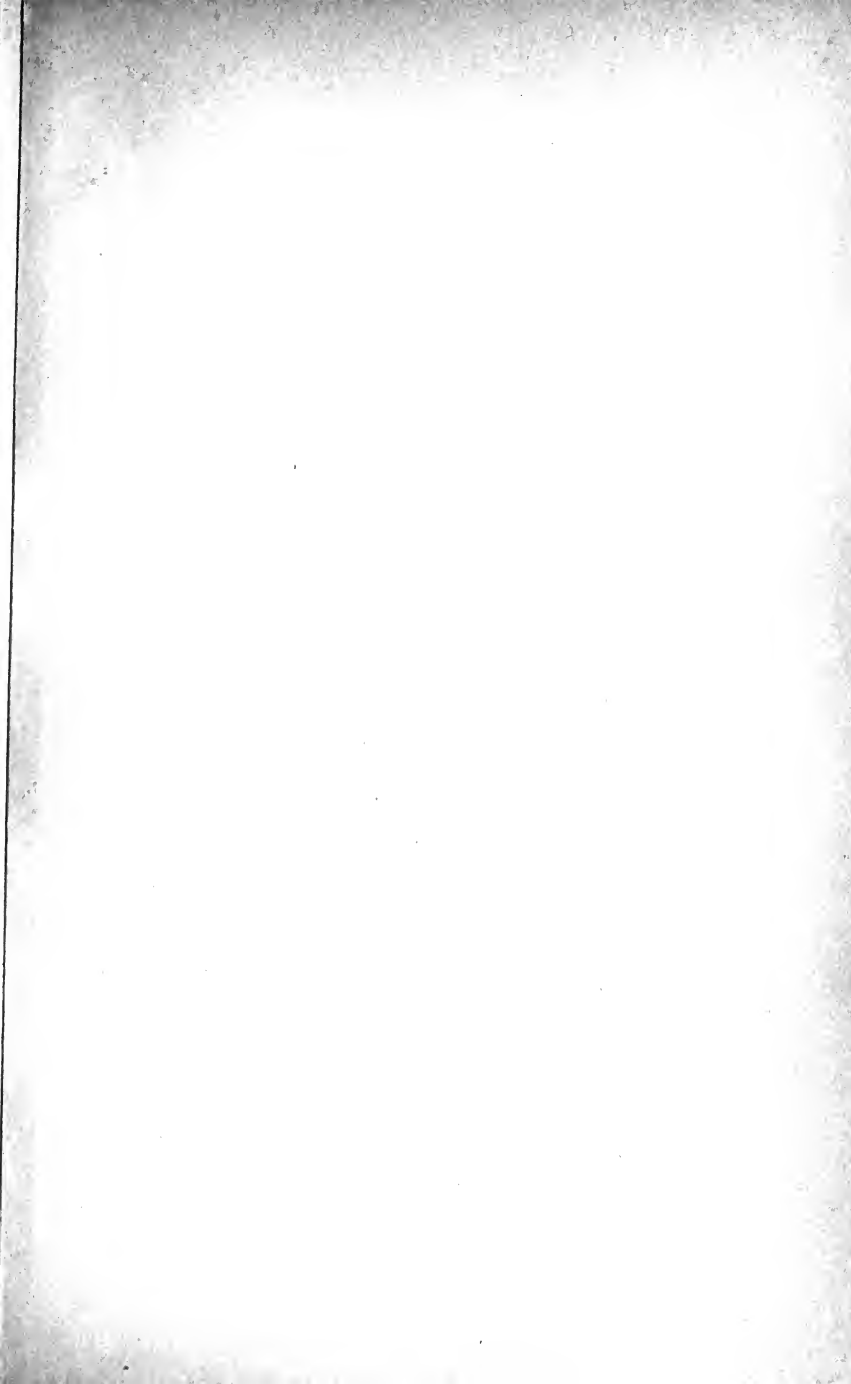
**A**FTER a motor journey through the uplands (rising from 700 to 2000 feet above the sea) one reaches a ruined sugar mill called Henrietta, whence there is still a road, but it is safer and more comfortable to walk a mile over it than to travel on wheels. It is a mile of uninteresting cane-fields, chocolate ground covered with lava stones and scrub. Turning sharp to the right along a little byway through cottage gardens and cottage canes, and suddenly—it is always so here—I am conscious that a river is falling over a rock on the left. I leave the path, cross a tiny patch of grass and canes and find myself on the edge of an enormous ravine, with a narrow track leading downwards through the red soil of its right side. After going a dozen yards I am clear of bushes and the whole marvellous scene is before me. I am facing the west and this is what I see, for I must write it where I stand. To the left and slightly behind me are the seven falls of the Tamarin River ; it was the highest and most important which first caught my eye, but now the whole series is in full

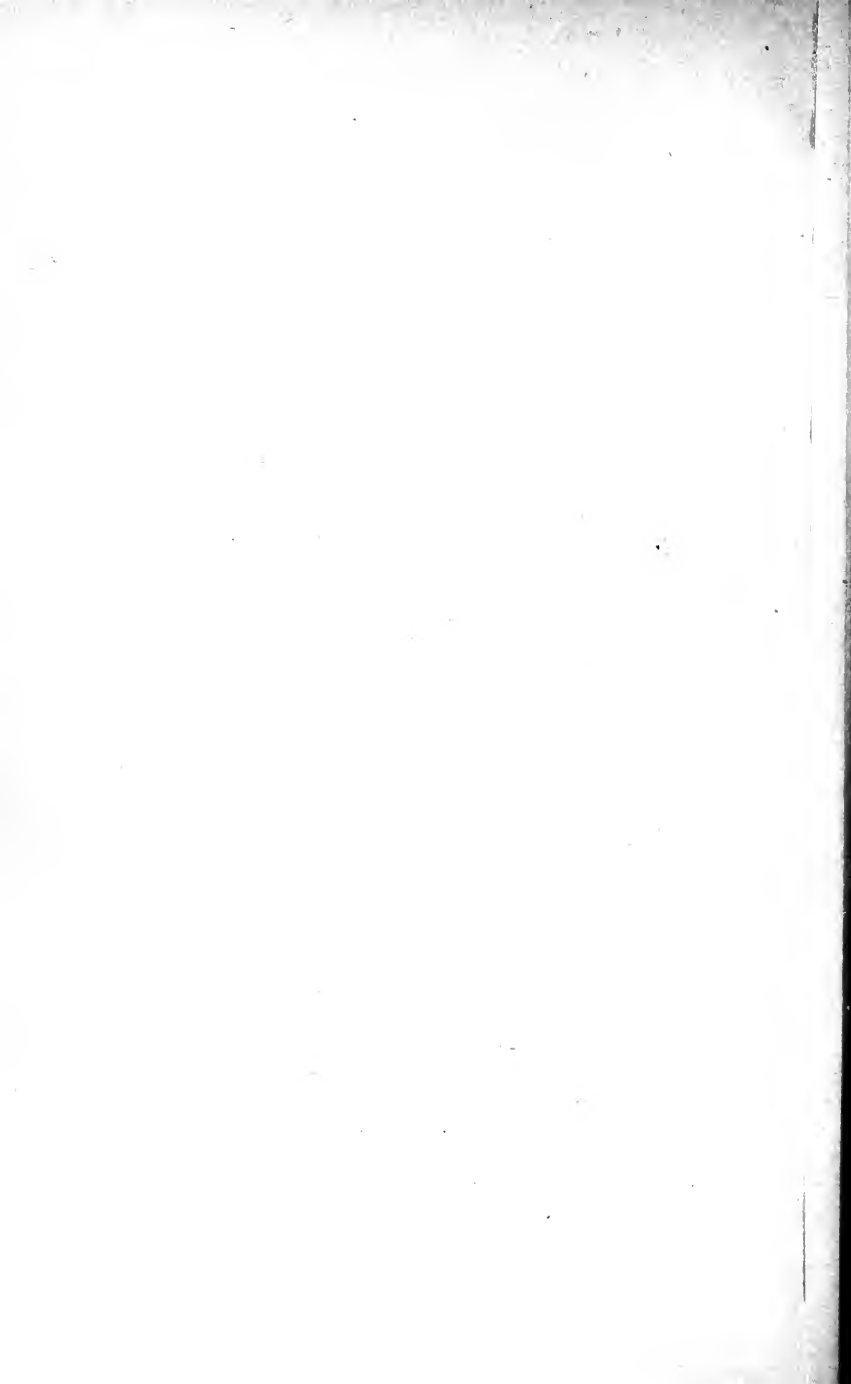
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view and from top to bottom the height may be 700 feet. From the last fall the river passes between two straight high walls of rock, very close together. There it is hidden from sight, but issues from the lower end of the cañon in a long stretch of rapids, then turning sharply disappears. The falls are singularly fine, but I hardly glance at them so wonderful is the prospect in front of me.

I tried to describe the Réduit gorge for it impressed and fascinated me enormously ; but one goes from strength to strength and, compared with the Tamarin ravine, the gorge of the Grande Rivière is "as water is to wine." They are similar in that they both come upon you suddenly, that they dig into the tableland and run seawards, that they are wide and deep, that a river of rapids runs in the hollow between their steep sides and that one looks through a sort of triangular window—at the western extremity of each—on to a space of sea. There the similarity ends, for Tamarin has a grandeur of proportion and a glory of form with which le Réduit, beautiful as it is, cannot compare.

Here the depth from the surface to the stream is a thousand feet and on the far side of the window of the ravine the land rises for another 200 feet, while on my side it is so level that the sky line seems to have been drawn with a ruler. In this ravine, from the falls to the opening at the western end, there are only three reaches of river and two mammoth but-





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tresses dividing them, making roughly a figure like a Z. The ravine only begins at the falls ; it opens out widely at once and, even in the middle of its length, must be half a mile from the edge of the cliff on one side to the same level on the other. The sides of the ravine fall sheer through 200 feet of purple-grey rock and then slope steeply inwards till they meet in the river bed. The shadows are vast and deep, enveloping the ravine, except where the sun catches a ridge and makes a brilliant ribbon of light down the tree-clad buttress. Through the V-shaped window, at the end of the ravine, one sees a sunlit plain of yellow cane-fields chequered by dark woods, and then, beyond, a sea of burnished silver with a narrow line of foam where the waves break on a belt of coral just beyond the shore.

Following the straight line of tableland, about 400 yards to the right from the edge of the cliff rises a broken peak and further still to the right there is another. Both are torn and jagged beyond belief with long points of bare rock cut against the sky. One is Montagne du Rempart, the other the Trois Mamelles, and they might be fragments of a shattered shell—a shell some miles in diameter. The resemblance is not unnatural for these fantastic rocks, over 2000 feet in height, are all that remain of the thin walls of a long extinct volcano.

That sunny lowland by the sea sweeps southward

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round the shore of Tamarin Bay and rises into the height called Grande Montagne, on the other side of which lies the Bay of Grande Rivière Noire where on the 21st August, 1810, H.M.'s Frigate, *Sirius*, Captain Pym, R.N., re-took from the French the *Wyndham* which, flying from Port Imperial, as it was then called, had in vain sought shelter on the opposite side of the island. The story of the naval engagement at Grand Port is known to few Englishmen, but after a hundred years it still thrills and I will tell it, premising only this, that I have drawn the facts mainly from French sources.

During many years of war with France, English shipping and English interests in the East had suffered, often and severely, from the attacks of French War vessels and especially of privateers, fitted out and having their headquarters in the two French Islands, Ile Bonaparte (otherwise known as Bourbon, and now as Réunion) and Ile de France, called also at different times, Cerné and Mauritius. In 1810 it was decided to capture these islands, a decision which ought to have been taken and put into execution many years earlier, but it remained for Lord Minto to carry out a plan which had been strongly urged by the Marquis of Wellesley years earlier. As a preliminary the small island of Rodrigues, 350 miles east of Ile de France, was seized and made the base of operations. Preparations having been completed,

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an expedition consisting of five frigates, the *Boadicea*, *Sirius*, *Magicienne*, *Iphigénie*, and the *Néréide*, with a number of troops under Colonel Keating, left Rodrigues on the 3rd July, 1810, reached Ile Bonaparte on the 7th July and part of the force was landed the same day. When two detachments of 150 men in each had been landed at different places somewhat north of the principal town, St. Denis, a violent storm came on and it was impossible to continue the disembarkation. Every effort to reach the shore resulted in the boats being swept out to sea ; night was coming on and Colonel Keating, in command of the expedition, was at his wit's end to know how to send orders to the two parties on shore to unite and hold their ground by every means in their power until it was possible to reinforce them. At this juncture, Lieutenant Foulstone, of the 69th regiment, volunteered to attempt to gain the shore by swimming and, though the attempt seemed madness, his offer was accepted. A boat took Foulstone as far as it was able and he jumped into the sea, just as an enormous incoming wave reached the boat. By a miracle he was thrown beyond the swiftest race of the tide and being a strong swimmer he was able, though much bruised, to hold his own and finally to gain the shore and deliver his message. The next morning, the weather being still very bad, Keating determined to find a more sheltered spot and for that

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purpose weighed anchor and sailed to Grande Chaloupe, some miles south of St. Denis but separated from the town by a precipitous hill, 1500 feet high and covered with forest. Between 700 and 800 men were landed at Grande Chaloupe, they scaled the hill, descended the other side and engaged the French who were waiting to receive them. After several actions, in which the British lost 88 killed and 160 wounded, while the French losses were 12 killed and 50 wounded, the place capitulated on the 9th July, and Mr. Robert Townsend Farquhar, who accompanied the expedition, was installed as Governor. The main object was the capture of Ile de France and, as it was known that the only French squadron then fit for sea—a squadron consisting of the frigates *Bellone*, and *Minerve* and the corvette *Victor*, all under the command of Commandant Duperré—was then cruising off the coast of Africa, it was decided at once to seize the Ile de la Passe, a very small island and fort guarding the entrance to Port Imperial, the principal place on the east coast of the Ile de France. Port Imperial—the Grand Port of to-day with its village and railway station at Mahébourg—is a bay of considerable extent. From the Ile de la Passe to the shore is three miles and the width of the bay is not much less, but the water is shallow, especially in the inner bay, to which there are three entrances from the outer harbour, but only two of them were practicable for vessels of the

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draught of frigates a hundred years ago. Bordering the channels were coral reefs.

The British plan to seize the fort and island of Ile de la Passe was carried out with perfect success, during the night of the 14th August, 1810. When the *Sirius* and the *Néréide* arrived in sight of the island on the morning of the 14th, 70 men were transferred from the former vessel to the *Néréide*, commanded by Captain Willoughby, and the *Sirius* then sailed out of sight so as not to arouse suspicion. The *Néréide* passed the morning cruising near the island, but at mid-day she sailed away, returned at 10 P.M. and lay to, four or five miles away. In the fort at this time there were only 38 men, but the place was so naturally strong that this number was quite enough to hold it if they had been on the alert. The works were carved out of the rock of the island, and the outer defences consisted of a bastion mounting twelve 36-pounders, which completely swept the narrow and tortuous passage by which alone access could be gained to the bay. So narrow was this channel that the sails of ships entering almost touched the guns of the bastion—and within, hidden by a rock, was the anchorage called *Fer à Cheval* protected by a second battery of six 24-pounders and four mortars. The fort had but one weak spot, a landing-place on the shore side, practicable in fine weather, and only protected by a low wooden palisade.

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The British blue-jackets, to the number of 140 in seven boats, made for this spot and as the night was calm, though dark and rainy, they entered the channel without being seen, and were close to the sentry on duty when challenged. A reply came from the boats that they were shipwrecked people seeking a landing-place and, as they did not cease rowing, they were on the sentry and had disarmed him and four negroes in a moment. The rest of the garrison were surprised in their sleep. As soon as the British were masters of the place, a light was hoisted on the sea-side of the bastion to inform the *Néréide* of the success of the enterprise. A vessel, the *Diligente*, was lying at anchor not far off, and an attempt was made to take her, but this failed and one of the British boats was sunk. At dawn on the 15th the people of Grand Port were stupefied to see the British ensign floating over the Ile de la Passe, while the *Néréide* arrived and cast anchor at *Fer à Cheval* under the guns of the battery.

At this time General Decaen was Captain General of the Ile de France and, while he was holding a review of troops on the Champ de Mars, at Port Napoléon, in honour of the Emperor's birthday, a messenger from Mahébourg arrived with the news that the British had captured the Ile de la Passe. Decaen at once sent General Vandermessen with the available troops and, on arrival, these served to defend

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the coast as far as possible from the attacks of the British. The latter, however, succeeded in taking a small fort at *Pointe du Diable*, from which they retired after spiking the guns; they overthrew VanderMESSen's advance guard at Old Grand Port, and they made an abortive attack on the batteries at Grande Rivière South East. Moreover, they commandeered such provisions as they required and duly paid for them.

Decaen realised that no troops at his disposal could move the British from their strong position without ships, and as Duperré had left for the coast of Africa in the previous March, and no one knew where he was, the only thing to do was to hasten the refitting of such war-vessels as remained at Port Napoléon, in the hope that they would be ready to take the sea and dislodge the British before the arrival of reinforcements.

It happened, however, that Duperré was close by, and it was he who was to upset the calculations of friends and foes. His squadron consisted of the *Bellone* under his own command, the *Minerve* under Bouvet, and the *Victor* under Morice. On the 3rd July, this squadron had fallen in with three armed troopships of the English East Indian Company carrying about 1200 British troops. An engagement had resulted, and Duperré succeeded in capturing all three ships which were named the *Wyndham*, the *Astell*, and the *Ceylon*; the last commanded by Captain Moreton,

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who was seriously wounded in the action. Owing to negligence on the part of Commander Morice of the *Victor*, the *Astell* managed to escape during the first night after she had lowered her colours, but the other two ships were secured and put under the command of French officers. After completing certain necessary repairs to his own ships and the prizes, Duperré sailed for Ile de France and, on August 20th at 8 A.M., the squadron, led by the *Victor* with the *Bellone* and *Wyndham* on the starboard quarter, the *Minerve* and *Ceylon* on the port, sighted the mountains of Grand Port and, at noon, his ships were near enough to distinguish the French colours on the fort of Ile de la Passe and a signal flying to the effect that, "the enemy is cruising between *Coin du Mer* and *Ile aux Cerfs*." A large three-master flying the tricolour was also made out in the *Fer à Cheval*.

As the enemy were said to be cruising from east to north, Duperré was only too glad of the opportunity of getting his prizes safely home, so he ordered the *Minerve* and *Ceylon* to pass ahead, to follow the *Victor* to the anchorage at *Fer à Cheval* and take position alongside the vessel which was seen to be lying there. As soon as they were in, he would follow with the *Wyndham*, for he wished to give them all the room possible in such a narrow channel. The ships then advanced in line, the *Victor* leading, the *Minerve*, the *Ceylon*, the *Bellone* and the *Wyndham* following. At  
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12.30 a soldier on the *Bellone* fell overboard and she luffed in order to pick him up, while the *Wyndham* had to change her course to avoid a collision. At 1 P.M. the *Victor* entered the Passe and was at once fired upon by the fort and by the vessel at anchor, both of them hoisting the British ensign in place of the tricolour. As the *Victor* came alongside the *Néréide* she was ordered to surrender and, believing that the colony was in the hands of the British, Morice lowered his colours and came to anchor.

Duperré on the *Bellone*, realising the state of affairs, signalled to the others to join him. Bouvet, on the *Minerve*, endeavoured to obey, but he had gone too far and, finding that a turn to either side would throw his ship on the rocks, he stood straight down the Passe, taking the broadsides of the fort and the *Néréide* as unpleasant necessities and, carrying on to the inner harbour, signalled to the *Victor* to cut his cable at once and follow him. The *Ceylon*, close behind, had also to run the gauntlet of fort and *Néréide*, and, in doing so, her late Commander, Moreton, was wounded again, but the three French ships were soon safely inside the inner harbour beyond the reach of the British guns. For a moment Duperré was at a loss what to do, but only for a moment, then, cramming on full sail and signalling the *Wyndham* to follow, he steered for the Passe and, disdaining the fort, poured a broadside into the *Néréide* as he passed and then

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joined the rest of the squadron and sailed slowly towards the shore, where they discovered that the Colony was not, as they had thought, in the hands of the British.

The *Wyndham*, badly steered, missed the entrance to the Passe and then stood away down the coast to find shelter elsewhere. She was met and captured by the *Sirius*, and Captain Pym, hearing what had occurred at Grand Port, sent the *Wyndham* straight to Réunion to tell Mr. Farquhar of the return of Duperré's squadron and the position of the *Néréide*.

To understand the subsequent engagement it is necessary to remind the reader that there were only three channels, two of them practicable for ships of war, from the outer to the inner bay of Port Imperial; that those channels were enclosed between coral reefs, and that while the wind was from the east, as then, it was possible for vessels at the Ile de la Passe, or outside it, to sail into the bay, but it was impossible for vessels inside to gain the sea, or even for those in the inner harbour to reach the Passe. Under these circumstances Duperré so disposed his ships as to command the three channels, and also placed the smaller ships in position to help the larger without being themselves greatly exposed. The vessels lay with their port sides towards the sea, in the following order: the *Minerve*, across the northern channel, commanded also that in the centre, the *Bellone*, rather ahead, covered the

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entrance to the southern channel, while the *Ceylon* on the right of the *Minerve* and the *Victor* on the right of the *Ceylon* completed the line.

At 4 P.M. Captain Willoughby sent a boat, with a letter to Duperré, calling upon him to deliver the *Victor* on the ground that she had already surrendered. Duperré replied that, being within the waters of the Colony, the question was not one for him to settle but depended upon the decision of Decaen, the Captain-General, to whom he would refer it, but that if the English wanted the corvette they had better come and take her.

A messenger had informed Decaen of the arrival of Duperré and his squadron at Grand Port and the Captain-General, considering that after a six months' cruise the companies of the French ships would need strengthening, landed sixty sailors from the *Manche* and the *Entreprenant*, then under repair at Port Napoléon, and took the men with him to Mahébourg. Before leaving Port Napoléon, Decaen ordered Captain Hamelin, of the *Vénus*, to get his ships to sea as quickly as possible, and sail to Grand Port to join Duperré.

Decaen reached Mahébourg during the night of the 21st-22nd August, and found the *Néréide* alone, supported by the fort of Ile de la Passe, opposing the three French frigates and their corvette. The 22nd was passed by the French in making every possible preparation, both ashore and afloat, and late in the afternoon

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the *Sirius*, Captain Pym, appeared, joined the *Néréide*, and both frigates made sail towards the French line. Almost at once the *Sirius* got ashore and there remained, and Decaen took advantage of the delay and the darkness to move all the beacons which marked the channels from the outer to the inner bay.

The *Sirius* was refloated, but the morning of the 23rd passed without any further advance on the part of the two English ships. About 1 P.M. two sails were sighted to seaward of the *Pointe du Diable*, and the French hoped that they were the advance guard of Hamelin's division. They proved to be the *Iphigénie*, Captain Lambert, and the *Magicienne*, Captain Curtis, from Ile Bonaparte, whence, warned by the *Wyndham* and favoured by the wind, they had come to the assistance of their friends. The two latest arrivals sailed straight through the *Passe*, and a council was at once held by the four English captains, the result of which was that, at 5 P.M., the British ships weighed anchor and sailed slowly towards the inner harbour, the *Magicienne* and the *Iphigénie* making for the *Minerve*, the *Sirius* and the *Néréide* for the *Bellone*.

The evening was very fine, the sun just setting, and the sea calm, when the stillness was broken by the thunder of cannon, re-echoed from the hills, and soon the bay was obscured by thick clouds of smoke, which increased as the action was continued through the



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night ; only occasionally, when some stronger puff or wind cleared the air for a moment, was it possible to see, here or there, how the battle sped.

The *Magicienne*, hoping to turn the position, made for the shallow channel, where she went aground within pistol-shot of the *Minerve*. All Curtis's efforts to get his ship afloat were vain, for the sharpshooters of the *Minerve* were able, at that short distance, to hit all the men engaged in this work, and when, shortly afterwards, a shot carried away the capstan the attempt was abandoned. The *Magicienne* was in a bad case, but the *Minerve* was far from happy, for the *Iphigénie*, which had found the centre channel, was now pouring in broadsides. Whilst Bouvet was trying to get his ship round, some of the moorings were shot away and the *Minerve* began to drift inshore. The *Ceylon* was thus exposed to the fire of the two English ships, and as that was not to his liking, her commander at once cut his cables, hoisted sail, and made after the *Minerve*—"not wishing to abandon" the larger ship—as it is somewhat naïvely put. The *Sirius*, meanwhile, in an attempt to cut off the *Bellone*, had gone ashore, hard and fast, in such a position that only the two chasing guns could be used. The *Néréide* having sailed down the southern channel, was more fortunate and pouring one broadside into the *Bellone* gave the *Victor* the full benefit of the other, and to such effect that all the principal officers and many of the crew of the latter

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ship were hit, the moorings were carried away, and the *Victor* drifted to the end of the inner harbour and there went ashore without firing a shot. The French line was broken and Duperré, seeing the *Bellone* isolated, let go his moorings and drifted inshore, closely followed by the *Néréide* and the *Iphigénie*. The *Ceylon* had already fouled the *Minerve*, and the two drifting together ran into the *Bellone*, but getting apart again, the *Minerve* and the *Ceylon* touched lightly on a shoal called the Grand Pâté, where the *Néréide*, in hot pursuit, ran hard aground and remained firmly fixed.

Up to 7 P.M. the English ships had had much the best of the battle, as far as fighting went. The French line was broken, the *Victor* was ashore out of action, and the *Bellone*, the *Minerve*, and the *Ceylon*—whose captain had just been shot in the leg—had left their positions, drifted and sailed as near the shore as they could get, pursued by two of the English ships, while the *Magicienne* and the *Sirius* remained on the reefs in the middle of the bay, out of action for all practical purposes.

But the *Bellone* was afloat, the *Minerve* and *Ceylon* either afloat or only lightly aground, with friends, reinforcements, stores and ammunition behind them in Mahébourg; while the *Néréide* was fast on the shoal, in such a position that she could make little reply to the fire poured into her from close quarters. By this time—8 P.M.—it was quite dark and the clouds of

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smoke hanging over the bay made it impossible to see beyond the shortest distance. The fight continued, and at 10.30 P.M. Duperré was seriously wounded by a shot in the face and Bouvet assumed command. The *Néréide* had long since ceased to take part in the battle when, at 11 P.M., the firing gradually ceased, and, at 3 A.M., Decaen sent an officer on board the *Bellone* to ask for news and offer to replenish their stores of ammunition. This officer also reported that a French prisoner had escaped from the *Néréide*, swam ashore and stated that the *Néréide* had abandoned the contest and surrendered hours before, but that, in the darkness and din of battle, no notice had been taken. Bouvet refused to believe this story until daylight showed the *Néréide* lying close by, with foremast and mainmast gone and only half the mizen-mast left, on which fluttered the remnant of a British flag. The sides of her battery were in splinters, the guns dismounted, the ship ashore, and one historian says that every man on board had been either killed or wounded.

As the light of dawn pierced slowly through the heavy wreaths of smoke which still hung over the bay, it was seen that the *Sirius* remained fast on the reef, the *Magicienne* was similarly placed with several holes through her hull, while the *Iphigénie* was comparatively uninjured, for the *Néréide*, lying between her and the guns of the enemy, had completely masked her. The

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French had suffered, but not to the same extent, and as the sun rose the fight was renewed on very unequal terms.

The *Magicienne* was near enough to the *Néréide* to make it difficult for the French to send a boat alongside the latter ship, and it was only at 3 P.M. when he had silenced the fire of the *Magicienne* that Bouvet was able to despatch an officer to take possession of the British frigate. When he boarded the *Néréide* the spectacle disclosed was pitiable. Over a hundred dead and wounded men—amongst them Willoughby, apparently lifeless—lying about the decks, the ladders, and the dismounted guns, while a midshipman was the only officer in a condition to take command. For hours after it had been impossible to make any resistance, the *Néréide* had been a target for all the guns that the three French ships could train upon her. The wounded were removed to the *Bellone*, and it was necessary to rig a spar to the shattered mizen-mast of the prize in order to carry the French flag. Willoughby, when attended to by the French surgeons, was found to be alive, and he was laid by the side of Duperré, whose condition was not much better.

During this time the *Iphigénie* had managed to work its way slowly towards the *Magicienne*, and the French saw, by the constant passage of boats from the latter to the former ship, that it was intended to abandon the *Magicienne*. In the evening, the transfer of the

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crew being completed, the British set fire to the *Magicienne*, and as she burnt, the guns, which had been loaded for the last time, fired a final shot at the enemy. This, however, did not amount to much, for as has been said, the ship was in such a position that only her chasing guns could be brought to bear effectively. Just before 10 P.M. a lurid light and a violent explosion signalled the fact that the *Magicienne* had been blown up.

The night was fine and the French took advantage of it to complete the transfer of the wounded from the *Néréide*, and also to make preparations for floating their stranded ships, though it is not clear when or how they had got ashore.

At daylight on the 25th the French ships opened fire on the *Sirius*, which made but little reply. It was soon evident that Captain Pym was transferring his crew to the *Iphigénie*, and Bouvet, fearing that this ship would also escape him, made efforts to send a prize crew on board by the *Ceylon*. Before he had accomplished anything, smoke was seen to be issuing from the ports of the *Sirius*; very soon she burst into flame and before noon the British commodore's frigate blew up with a deafening explosion. At the same time Pym hoisted his flag on the *Iphigénie*, and that ship made what progress she could, against the wind, towards the Ile de la Passe and managed to reach the centre channel to the outer bay where she was out of cannon shot.

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During the day Generals Decaen and Vandermessen went on board the *Bellone* to see Duperré and congratulate him on his victory. With much difficulty they persuaded him to leave his ship and accept the hospitality of M. Robillard, who pressed Duperré to allow himself to be moved to a house, Beau Vallon, a mile from Mahébourg. The latter only consented when he found that Willoughby was included in the invitation. The house is there to-day, almost exactly as it was a century ago, and in the upper storey is a large front room where Duperré and Willoughby lay, side by side, and were nursed into convalescence by the ladies of M. Robillard's family.

The rest of the story is soon told. Bouvet, realising Pym's intentions, made frantic efforts to get the *Minerve* and the *Victor* hauled out to engage the *Iphigénie*, and prevent her leaving the bay should the wind change; otherwise the 26th August passed without incident. At dawn on the 27th the *Iphigénie* was seen to be lying at *Fer à Cheval*, while the *Minerve* was still making her tortoise-like movements in pursuit. At 11 A.M. Hamelin's division, the *Venus*, *Manche*, *Astrée* and *Entreprenant*, was signalled approaching from the north, and Decaen immediately went on board the *Minerve*, hoisted his admiral's flag (for he enjoyed the title of admiral as well as that of captain-general), signalled to Hamelin not to communicate, prepared a document, to be despatched next morning,

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summoning Pym to surrender at discretion, and then returned to Mahébourg. Hamelin's ships were a long way off and, having regard to the wind, it was unlikely that he could reach the Ile de la Passe before evening.

Hamelin would not, or could not, make out the Captain-General's signal and reached his anchorage off Ile de la Passe sooner than was expected. Appreciating the situation, and desiring to have some share in the victory of Grand Port, he at once called upon Captain Lambert to surrender. The negotiations continued till the next morning, the 28th, when Lambert duly received Decaen's more peremptory letter and, choosing the lesser of two evils, replied that he accepted Hamelin's terms and did not suppose that the Captain-General desired to make them more onerous. Decaen was very annoyed with Hamelin, but recognised the arrangement, whereupon the *Iphigénie* and the fort at Ile de la Passe were duly handed over to the French, who undertook to send all the British sailors and soldiers to a British port. At 11 A.M. the British flag was hauled down and the tricolour hoisted on fort and frigate.

Thus ended the engagement of Grand Port, with a loss to the British of 276 killed and wounded, while the French lost 36 killed and 112 wounded. It was a fair fight with four ships aside. The British attacked and had the wind in their favour for

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that purpose, but the fight took place in the treacherous waters of a shallow bay, where the French knew every yard and the English were strangers. Still the British captains began well : they broke the enemy's line and put one ship out of action, while the other three were driven towards shore huddled together in a rather helpless entanglement. Then came darkness and confusion, and from that moment all the advantages were with the French. The victory was as complete as can well be imagined : the *Sirius* and the *Magicienne* burnt to save them from falling into the hands of the enemy ; the *Néréide* and *Iphigénie* captured with all their guns and stores, 276 officers and men killed and wounded, the four captains and the whole of their men taken prisoners. Considering the position of the British on the 20th August, when the French ships had to pass through the narrow channel of the Passe, under the guns of the fort, and again, when the four British vessels, with the wind behind them broke the French line, it is very difficult to understand why they came out of the encounter so badly.

There could be no object in trying to minimise or find excuses for such a defeat, but it is not quite easy to account for the tradition that this unquestioned victory of French arms sheds special lustre upon the then population of the island. It was a victory of French warships, manned and officered by Frenchmen, over English warships, manned and officered



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by Englishmen. The people of the colony seem to have been concerned chiefly as spectators whose sympathies were very naturally with their own nationals. The names of the French officers engaged are not to be found on a list of original landholders in the Ile de France, and if amongst the crews were names still known in the island that would not prove that those who in 1810 bore the names were Creoles. The Mauritians, born and bred, were to have very soon an opportunity of distinguishing themselves; for, on the 29th November following, General Abercromby landed a force some miles north of Port Napoléon and on the 3rd December, after a few small engagements in which the English lost 162 and General Decaen 62 men, a capitulation was signed by which the island was handed over to the British Crown, and it has so remained ever since. As one result of General Abercromby's success the following vessels, then assisting in the defence of Port Napoléon, viz. the *Manche*, *Bellone*, *Aitrée*, *Minerve*, *Victor*, *Entreprenant*, as well as the *Iphigénie*, *Néréide* and *Ceylon* fell into the hands of the victors.

The real object aimed at, and the real end gained by the capture of Mauritius, was the suppression of that system of privateering which, with the islands of Mauritius and Bourbon as a base, and men like Surcouf, Hodoul, Dutertre and Malroux as leaders, had throughout a long term of years done such enormous damage

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to British shipping in the Eastern Seas. Steam vessels, electricity and modern weapons have made the privateering of a century ago impossible ; but, apart from that, the opening of the Suez Canal, with the consequent diversion of traffic, has left the Mascarenhas Islands in an ocean backwater.

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**S**EVEN thousand miles from England, twenty-five days by steamer from Marseilles, through the Canal and Red Sea, round Cape Guardafui and down the Indian Ocean to twenty degrees south of the line, will take you to a tiny port in the small French island of Réunion. Known to the Eastern navigators of the ninth century, the island was rediscovered by the Portuguese very early in the sixteenth century and named by them Santa Apollonia. The Portuguese could not find any use for the island, but the French, after several attempts to occupy and subsequent abandonments, finally took steps, in 1665, through the French East India Company, to make a settlement, and the place was very gradually peopled by a few French adventurers and some slaves from Madagascar and Africa. In 1649 they had called the island Bourbon, in 1793 it became la Réunion, in 1806 Ile Bonaparte, and resumed the name of Bourbon at the Restoration in 1810. In 1848, under the Second Republic, the name Réunion was again substituted, and to-day it is called Réunion or Bourbon indifferently.

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The island is about 45 miles long by 32 broad ; a railway with a six-mile tunnel, runs round more than half the littoral and, from the principal coast stations, fair roads connect with the mountain villages in the interior. The scenery is singularly lovely in many up-country places, such as Salazie, Hellbourg and Le Brulé, but Cilaos has attractions beyond all rivals. The route is by rail from St. Denis (the capital and seat of Government), or from le Port, to St. Louis on the south-west coast, and from there seven kilometres by carriage to Les Aloès, on the western side of the great ravine which is drained by the Rivière S. Etienne. The country all about Les Aloès looks fairly miserable. The road is indifferent and very dusty, the inhabitants are not numerous, they are of all colours and many races, and their habitations and villages are distinctly squalid. The principal cultivation is sugar, but the cane-fields are covered with rocks and stones, and most of the land is lying waste. There are flowers in the cottage gardens—*hibiscus*, *franciscea* and huge plants of pink and scarlet begonias—but they only serve to accentuate the signs of poverty. Les Aloès can never have been a really prosperous place, but for years the scattered population has been afflicted by a sort of epidemic of malaria, a scourge which has spread far up the ravine and claimed many victims.

At Les Aloès, travellers who have made the necessary arrangements beforehand are met by chairs

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and porters to carry them and their luggage to Cilaos, which is distant twenty-eight kilometres by a good path. This corps of bearers cannot be over-praised. The men are all young and wiry, they come from Cilaos, many are almost quite white, and the pace at which they travel, whether carrying 50 lbs. of luggage or a heavy passenger in a chair, is almost incredible. They are surefooted as goats, good-tempered and obliging, and never attempt to fleece the stranger. There is a tariff and a custom as regards *pourboires*, and that settles the matter. No doubt those who want their pound of flesh can have it, but there are many places on the road where the path is so steep that any able-bodied man or woman will prefer to walk. The sun is fierce, the path is enclosed between high rocks, there is hardly a breath of air and the heat is intense. In the first seven kilometres one gains nothing in height. The path rises and falls, crosses and recrosses the river, and the only noticeable fact is that one is walking up a ravine, with the stream on the right for the most part, and one constantly passes patches of cultivation—maize, vanilla, tobacco—with tiny grass huts inhabited by white (or almost white) children wearing garments and hats of Western fashion.

A short distance after passing Kil. XIV (counted from St. Louis) the path—then following the western side of the ravine—turns sharply to the left through a short tunnel and, without any previous warning, one

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is in face of a spectacle of surpassing beauty. The eastern wall of the ravine rises sheer for 3000 feet; there are green things clinging to the rock, but for all that the face of it is straight and unbroken from top to base, and a pebble thrown from the summit might fall into the stony bed of the river. The edge of the cliff cuts a sky of pure cobalt, unflecked by even the smallest cloud until, in the far distance, magnificent masses of snow-white *cumuli* back and partly encircle the heights of *Piton des Neiges*, *Le Gros Morne*, *Les trois Salazes* and *Le Grand Bénard*. The western wall of the ravine is as high as the eastern, but here it is not so steep: it is broken into spurs and gullies, all covered with foliage which cannot conceal their fantastic outlines. The two sides of the ravine approach each other very closely and so continue for nearly two miles, when they fall back east and west. Five miles ahead they must be three miles apart, and twelve miles ahead, the space which divides the walls cannot be less than six miles. The course of the river is directly towards the spectator and, just in front of him, the water traverses a very narrow cañon, the river cutting its way through a hundred feet of solid rock. The eye only just notices that detail in a vision of sublime immensity which has, I think, no parallel. The bed of the stream, a couple of hundred feet below, runs north and south through the narrow winding ravine with perpendicular walls of purple or grey, when the

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rock is not hidden by dark green foliage. One side is in brilliant sunlight, the other in deep shadow, except where some outstanding pinnacle catches a ray of dazzling light. The walls of this vast ravine widen suddenly in the middle distance and enclose a chain of peaks, ridges and valleys, the highest points of the group from 3000 to 4000 feet high. The sun, which is now above the western wall of the ravine, strikes full on this mass, lighting the peaks and ridges with yellow flame and filling the valleys with purple shadows, so that every detail of form is so plainly visible as to give a feeling of unreality. The view has come suddenly; it is so marvellous that one rather expects it to disappear. Behind the middle distance—miles behind, but still in fullest view on this perfect afternoon—the sides of the ravine run up into the three great mountain masses already named—*Grand Bénard* on the left, *Les trois Salazes* and *Le Gros Morne* in the centre, the *Piton des Neiges* on the right. This last is over 10,000 feet in height, and the others, from here, seem no lower, though in reality they are 9000, 6000 and 8000 feet respectively. They are all that remain of the gigantic volcano which, millions of years ago, must have been shattered into the fragments which now litter the island in every direction down to the very shore. The gigantic *cirque*, which encloses that group of brilliantly lighted hills in the middle distance, is one of three which form the

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mountain mass in the centre of the island. The *Piton des Neiges* is supposed to have been thrown up in some final convulsion of the volcano, and high up its sides the feet of the mountaineer sink deep into volcanic ash ; while the group of hills, which includes *Pieter Both*, *Palmiste Rouge*, *Piton Cap Noir* and the rest of them, as well as Cilaos and all the many " ilettes " (as the land between two adjoining streams is called), are the refuse left within the *cirque*, when at last the vents closed, the fires died out and millions of seasons of rain and drought cut out the ravines and worked the mass of rock and ash and once boiling mud into the peaks and ridges and valleys of to-day.

In view of a spectacle like this one can only try to paint an impression. The reality is superb and indescribable.

It may occur to a reader who has looked from Darjeeling across the Sikkim valley to the range of Himalayan snows, that I should not speak of immensity here. I too have stood on Tiger Hill and watched the sun rise on Kinchinjunga ; but still the proportions here impress me as vast, and I know the reason is that I can see them all plainly and at once. The cliffs of the ravine cut the sky to right and left, they confine my vision and lead my appreciation through a rising middle distance to where the lofty heights of *Piton des Neiges* lose themselves in those great white clouds. Everything is in full view ; one can see it all, from *Entre Deux*



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to the *Grand Bénard*, without so much as turning one's head ; and because the sky is very blue, the air clear, the sunshine intense and the furthest mountains less than fifteen miles away, one is able to grasp the proportions and realise their immensity, instead of losing them in distance. Everything is comparative, and this is a ravine. I have not seen or heard of another that can compare with it in wonder and grandeur.

Here, there is no sound, except that of the stream breaking over its rocky bed far below ; there is no sign of any living thing save one swallow, skimming over the shadows of the stream, and two white Straw-tails tracing silver curves against the dark background or the enclosing cliffs.

For the next two kilometres the scene seems to grow ever more beautiful, more impressive ; the background is the same, the middle distance becomes more brilliant, more intense, and the foreground changes every few yards, disclosing new features in the walls of the ravine, new effects of light and shade. From Kil. XVI to Kil. XVIII, a near hill shuts out the mountains and one can appreciate the river, which is here singularly beautiful, passing between narrow walls of rock, or widening to make an island of some sharp and lofty peak which has managed to resist complete disintegration. Then, emerging from another short tunnel, one faces the arid terraces of the Western wall of the ravine as it leans backward and loses something of its extreme

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sheerness. The sun has just sunk behind the edge of the western cliff and shafts of light are streaming down the western gorges and precipices as though projected from some celestial searchlight. Over a high bridge, thrown from either bank to one of those island peaks, one crosses the wide bed where two streams meet, and the real ascent begins at once. The climb is very steep and the path shows the traveller the sunny valley of the Eastern stream, the foot of the lofty Eastern wall being broken by many isolated pinnacles. Then comes a long dark tunnel piercing a high wall which completely shuts out everything to the north, and having reached the mountain group, but lately in middle distance, the *Piton des Neiges* and its fellows are no longer visible. As one steps out from the tunnel the effect is very singular. Passing from that Eastern picture through pitch darkness into a strong but different light, it is as though one had left a land of sunshine and splendour to face a strange forbidding country where everything suggests things weird and sinister. Straight in front, across a deep valley with precipitous sides, rise the bare slopes of *Le Grand Bénard*. Through the valley runs a river, and after half a mile's further walking you stand above the confluence of three streams, the *Bras Rouge*, the *St. Paul*, and the *Benjoin* which, united, form the Cilaos. The slopes of the mountain, the vertical walls of the streams, are devoid of any sign of vegetation ; the surface from river-bed right up the

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mountain side is reddish-grey and the light defines the harsh outlines of every ridge and every furrow with which the shaley soil is seamed. In the deep shadow of the river-bed, just below the actual meeting of the three *Bras*, there is a long wide space which must have been the haunt of some gigantic dragon. After devastating the low country the monster came here, I imagine, to hide and to sleep, and I can believe that when he awoke he would raise himself slowly on a scaly tail and, in sheer delight, dig titanic claws into the mountain side fifteen hundred feet above the stream. Nothing else would account for the hundreds, or thousands, of deep scratches which mark the whole length of *Les grettes du Bras Rouge*, giving a sort of Apollyonic character to all the valley between the *Piton du Cap Noir* (which rises abruptly on the right of the path), and the terraces of *Le Grand Bénard* opposite.

For nearly five kilometres the path cuts across the steep side of *Piton Cap Noir*, with the torrent of *Bras Benoit* in a deep gully on the left, and only last October a young porter going down from Cilaos, at night, walked over the edge of the path and was dashed to death on the precipice below. There were four or five men, all perfectly familiar with the road, but the first man carried the lantern, and the last man was so far from the light that, instead of following an inward bend of the path, he walked straight on, and

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disappeared instantly. His friends went back, and down the other side to the stream—it looks a quite impossible feat, even by day—but they found nothing. With the coming of daylight they saw the body, caught on a point of rock, halfway down the precipice, and how they got it up is a mystery.

At Kil. XXVI, the path crosses the stream at the head of an attractive waterfall, the *Cataracte du Cap Noir*, and it is very interesting to see here the power of water to cut through rock, and do the hardest part of the work which ends in the formation of these wild ravines.

From this point to Cilaos, which is 28 kilometres from Les Aloès, the ascent is very steep, and the view ahead is shut off by woods and hills till one comes out on the small but open plateau at the foot of the great mountains. The village of Cilaos lies so close to the base of the *Piton des Neiges* that the summit of that mountain is no longer visible. Cilaos, named after a famous *marron* (runaway slave) who once made it his stronghold, is a curious little place; a collection of tiny wooden houses on either side of a single street which, after passing through the village, narrows to the modest dimensions of a path, and zigzags steeply downwards for a mile in a north-westerly direction, to a small establishment of thermal springs and baths.

That is another matter with which we are not concerned; but in the wonderful climate—two or three





LE GRAND BÉNARD FROM CILAOIS. NOTRE DAME DES NEIGES, RÉUNION

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degrees of frost on some nights in August, and a hot sun all day for weeks together—amid these surroundings, it is interesting to read how all this region was cleared of *marrons* between 1680 and 1760. The first slaves were imported, in and after 1665, from Madagascar and from South Africa. Some of them escaped into the hills and the three great *cirques*, where they were joined by others, and from these fastnesses the *marrons* descended into the low country robbing, murdering and wasting the homesteads of the white and coloured settlers. A local militia was formed to deal with them, and they were regularly hunted, for months at a stretch, by bands of settlers under various leaders, of whom François de Mussard was the most intrepid and successful. It was the custom to shoot all *marrons*, male or female, at sight : to baptize them if there was any life left in them, and when dead to cut off their right hands in order to obtain the Government reward. This reward was the gift of a slave. Every leader of these bands of hunters made a written *déclaration* when the *chasse* was over and, in this statement, he spoke of the doings of himself and the other members of the expedition in the third person. The rewards were only paid on the production of the hands, and it was sheer loss when the stricken *marrons* fell—as they not infrequently did—down precipices into inaccessible ravines. The *déclarations* were, however, filed amongst the archives, and some of them

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are still extant. They are simple documents and bear a sort of family resemblance. For instance, in February 1740, Edouard Robert, one of the lieutenants of François de Mussard (who in later years was described as "Captain-General of the detachments of the island") was in pursuit of Fanga, chief of a band of *marrons* whose headquarters were in Cilaos, or Tsilaos as it was then written. Robert failed to take Fanga but managed to shoot his wife, Marianne, and this is the account of the affair given by Robert in his *déclaration*: "ayant tiré sur Marianne et la trouvant sur le point d'expirer, il lui demande si elle était baptisée; sur sa réponse négative il l'ondoie."

One must not feel very shocked, for this took place in the remotest fastnesses of Bourbon 170 years ago, and only 70 years earlier, in the lowlands of Scotland, the county of Clackmannan to wit, ten poor women were strangled to death on the plea that they had danced with the Devil on a small hill in the neighbourhood. It is almost needless to say that the only evidence of the "crime" was furnished by the women themselves, under severe pressure, in the course of an inquiry which extended over several years. In this case the hunters were Ministers of the Scotch Kirk, and the *chasse* was conducted with relentless persistence and malignity, but without that risk to the pursuers which was inseparable from a chase of *marrons* amid the peaks and precipices of Cilaos.



## DISBELIEF IN THE UNSEEN

NO one who has been in out-of-the-way places, and seen strange things, can have failed to notice the rather aggravating incredulity with which a plain statement of fact is received by listeners who have not met with the same experience. We all know the story of the flying fishes and Pharaoh's chariots, but it is curious that, in the twentieth century, many educated people should still be quite sceptical in regard to facts—say of natural history—with which others are perfectly familiar. Years ago I went on a sea-fishing expedition with a Malay Raja and about a dozen of his people. We had a steam launch, a large pulling boat, a small one, nets, spears, and rifles. If it seems a quaint idea to go fishing with rifles, the explanation is that these weapons are useful in waters which teem with sharks and crocodiles.

We chose a very nice spot where two long islands, lying off the shore, gave not only shelter but great stretches of shallow water with deep channels in between. The steam launch had to avoid the shallows, which are the best fishing-grounds, so most of us were

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in the large boat, and we told the launch to keep as near as the water would permit.

Malays are born watermen and born sportsmen, and we were fairly successful. We had at least one net hundreds of feet long and about three or four deep. This net was laid out in water of the same depth as the net, and it was held in an upright position by large cork floats on the surface of the water and light weights on the edge which almost touched the sand. The tide was ebbing and the simple idea was, that the fish, making for deep water, would be caught in the meshes of the net, while the boats guarded the two ends. After a time the ends were pulled together, or the boats were pulled slowly along the net, and we took in the fish caught in it. Then the net was hauled into the boats and set in a new place. Sometimes the small boat was paddled along at some distance on the shallower side and the men struck the water or the boat with paddles to drive the fish towards the net. The pursuit had been going on for some hours; the net was out and the boats at either end, when every one saw what looked like the dorsal fins of two huge fishes making straight for the middle of the net. A great cry was raised of "Shark! Shark!" for we all believed that a couple of sharks, which had been feeding in the shallows, were now making for deep water and must strike the net. The ends of the net were seized and firmly held by the men in both

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boats and, a moment later, the net was struck in the centre and began to move rapidly towards deep water, dragging both boats with it. At a time like this the Malay becomes really excited, and the men yelled themselves hoarse with delight. The two boats converged, bumped into each other and, whilst every one shouted some proposal, the Raja gave orders to take both ends of the net into the big boat, to twist the whole round and round and to hold on. This was done, and while a couple of men stayed in the small boat and made it fast astern of the larger one, the rest of us twisted the two lengths of net till they resembled a huge thick rope, to which we held grimly while we were dragged at a great pace into the deep waters of the Strait.

The launch was then some distance away, but we shouted and beckoned to those on board to follow. They did so at their best pace—not a very good one—but they never came really near to us until their assistance was useless. I cannot say how far we were dragged, it must have been a long way, it was by no means straight, and we soon realised that the sharks were going deeper and deeper, and we strained every nerve to hold them and, whenever it was possible, to pull in a bit of the net. Every one said the net would hold, and we trusted that in time the effort of towing the heavy boat and our unrelaxed strain would tire out the sharks, and enable us to pull them to the

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surface and shoot them. That was the end we toiled for and, to the huge delight of all on board, we found that we were getting in the net gradually, and it could not be long before we brought the quarry to the surface.

A dozen or more Malays, pulling with all their might, drew in the net hand over hand while the Raja and I stood ready with the rifles. Suddenly, through the deep but clear water there came in sight an enormous dark body, a great flat head with two large horns, bent forwards, and what looked to me like huge wings attached to either side of the body and of the same colour and substance. To describe what happened takes a little time to write or read, in actual fact a couple of seconds covered it. For safety the men were in the middle of the boat and, as the monster came within a foot of the surface, we all saw plainly enough that it was a single fish, apparently flat, that it had two remarkable horns and that it was gigantic in size. The men, bent double on the strain, growled "shoot ! shoot !" and shoot we did. At a distance of a few feet and with such an object one cannot well miss and, while I put in two bullets at the back of the creature's head, I could see that the Raja hit him very nearly in the same place. There was an appalling lashing of the water, an abrupt dive, while the net was torn through the hands of the men trying vainly to check the rush ; a gradual slackening

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of pace, and then the strain ceased altogether. The fish was sulking at the bottom, or at any rate a good many fathoms below the boat.

It had been a long, an exciting, and a very exhausting fight, under the full blaze of a tropical sun. The men were pretty well tired out; they felt sure of getting the monster now, and his sulking seemed to give the opportunity for a momentary rest and an animated discussion on the wonderful luck of securing such a trophy. The Devil Fish—for every one agreed as to his identity—was no longer tearing our boat through the water, he was not pulling at all, and we calculated that the heavy rifle bullets must have wounded him severely, and by-and-by we could pull him up again and deal with him. The steam launch was coming up and that would be a great help. Therefore the tense muscles relaxed for a moment, and the men stood up and stretched their aching backs and arms.

It was only a moment, and then, to our horror, we saw the floats and the tangled net rise noiselessly to the surface and make a confused pattern all round the boat.

We had forgotten the floats!

When the fish lay motionless below, and we relaxed the strain which had held him throughout his struggle, the floats at once brought the net to the surface and we lost the prize just as we were counting it bagged.

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The men growled over their lost prey, but the Raja exclaimed : "Ah, miserable luck ! No one will believe us when we return to tell the tale."

Those words struck me very much at the time, and in the endless discussions which followed—we fished no more that day—these men, many of whom had been fishing in these waters since boyhood, said that, though they had all heard of this fish, they had never seen one, and never seen the head or horns in any one's possession.

Within ten days I was a guest in Government House at Singapore, and I recounted the adventure at dinner on the night of my arrival. The company received the story with polite but amused incredulity, which rather annoyed me, for I was very young. I had spoken of the monster as a Devil Fish and made a point of the horns. A Bishop sat on one side of me and he remarked in an undertone : "I advise you, when next you have the opportunity, to secure not only the horns but the hoofs." Later in the evening the captain of a cruiser took me aside and said : "I cannot tell you how interested I was to hear your story of the Devil Fish ; you are the only person I have met who has really seen one. When I had a ship in the West Indies, looking over the side one day I saw one of these horned monsters in the water, but I have never mentioned it because I knew that no one would believe me."

*wouldn't believe he had seen  
fish because they had never seen  
one*

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There is a tiny, commonplace-looking fish which is found in most Malay rivers where the water is brackish. It is called the blow-pipe fish, because when it is feeding and flies are about, it stands on its tail, puts its small mouth just above the surface, and blows a drop of water at a fly. The aim is so true that five times out of six, or oftener, the drop of water hits the fly, which immediately falls and is gobbled up by the sportsman. Once I spent some days on a very small steamer anchored in a Malay river at a point where these blow-pipe fish were numerous. I had a friend with me, and we amused ourselves by dangling an artificial fly over the water from the deck of the ship, and noted that the fish can shoot its drop of water with great precision up to five feet from the surface of the water. We usually held the fly about two to three feet above the water, and directly the fish poised itself and fired its shot—almost always hitting the fly—we dropped the fly, which was at once taken by the fish, and then we pulled him out and put him in a bucket of water on the deck. When we had six or seven fish in the bucket we tried them again with the artificial fly, and as they readily responded we were able to watch the operation at close quarters. The blow-pipe fish is usually about four inches long, with dark bars across a light grey body.

There is another very common little fish which lives in muddy tidal creeks on the West Coast of the Malay

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*Peninsula. He has large protruding eyes and two side fins, which he uses to propel himself through the water or over the wet mud. There are usually quantities of mangrove trees growing in the mud and water of these creeks, and it is a common thing for this fish to crawl up the sloping stems and out along the muddy branches of such trees. A place like this is often infested by mosquitoes, and there I have seen the fish up a tree with half a dozen mosquitoes settled on him, and he every now and then giving himself a wriggle to get rid of them. It sounds curious, but there it is.*

There is a singing fish in Malay waters, and he sings a very strange song. His shape is rather that of a small sole, only that he is narrower across the back. For some reason best known to himself he clings to the side of a boat, and while there he sings his rather sad little song. I have only heard him while I was in a small steamer anchored in a tidal river, about two miles from the mouth. There I have heard the creature on several occasions, for an hour or more at a time, but always with intervals of silence. The noise he makes is very like that of a taut rope, working backwards and forwards through a ring or block in a high wind. It is loud enough to attract attention at once and, when it continues persistently, one walks about looking for the cause, and at last realises that it comes from under water. In the place where I have heard it a very strong



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tide runs, and the fish must have powerful suckers to enable it to hold on to the vessel's side.

Malays will tell you that a very small fish is sometimes found inside the coconut. I cannot pretend to any personal knowledge in regard to this statement. Squirrels are a great nuisance in a coconut plantation, and there are many devices for defeating their determination to get at the ripe nuts. They climb the trees and gnaw a hole through the rind and shell of the nut in order to get at the kernel. They often succeed and, as the hole is usually in the upper half of the nut, rain gets in and makes a tiny pond of water. It is here that the fish is supposed to be found and, if he can either fly, or climb the tree, or be carried by a bird and put in the hole, the thing may be possible.

Talking of coconuts reminds me of the monkey which is trained to climb the tree and bring down any nut you want. Of course it is an easy matter for the monkey to climb that straight and lofty palm but, at the first blush, it sounds unlikely that he can be trained to bring any particular nut. When you see it done it is a very simple matter, though the intelligence of the monkey will still make an impression on the spectator. In the first place, the owner of the monkey stands at the foot of the tree and holds in his hand one end of a long string, the other end being attached to the monkey's waist. The master points out to the

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monkey the particular tree to be climbed and the creature runs up with surprising agility till he sits amongst the nuts. Then he puts his hand on one and looks down; if that is not the nut you have named, the master gives the string a tug and says "no, no." The monkey tries another and another till he touches the right one when the master shouts "yes, throw it down." It is, however, necessary to detach the nut before it can be thrown down, and the stalk on which it hangs is so exceedingly tough that the monkey has to twist the nut round and round a great many times and also, probably, to tear the stalk with his teeth, before he can get the nut away. If the position of the nut admits of the treatment—and that is the case usually—the monkey holds on to a nut or a frond above his head while he twists the nut he wants with his feet. The rate at which he turns it round is amazing and the operation looks rather dangerous from below, especially when the nut falls with a resounding thud and the monkey is left swinging in the air with his foothold gone. The creature always seems to recover his equilibrium in time to see the nut thump on the ground. His face at that moment is a study—it is alive with expectation, a little fear and an enormous satisfaction.

Lest any reader, travelling in Malaya, should try this game and be disappointed, I had better add that I had often and often seen it played with great success

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and I thought it might interest a very Gracious Lady who was visiting the East. Therefore, being in Singapore, I sent to Malacca for the cleverest coconut climbing monkey in that ancient settlement. The monkey and his master duly arrived and one day the Gracious Lady went to see him do his turn. I explained what I believed he would do, and having pointed out to his master the particular nut to be gathered, the monkey was sent up the tree. Nothing would induce him to have anything to do with that nut, and after unavailing argument, he insisted upon pulling off and throwing down an entirely different one. The Gracious Lady chose another, but again the monkey refused to look at it and I concluded he did not know his business and I felt keenly that the display was a failure. When the monkey came down he seemed to be very angry ; so was his master and so was I. Therefore I said to the owner that I had asked for the cleverest monkey in Malacca and yet this creature could not do such a simple thing as to gather a selected nut. The man answered ; “ my monkey *is* the cleverest in Malacca, he collects 300 nuts a day, but of course they are ripe nuts, not green ones, he would never think of plucking a nut unless it were ripe and the ones you told him to throw down were green.” When this was explained the Gracious Lady made every one happy by saying she thought it much more clever of the monkey to select

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*the nuts*  
and gather only ripe nuts, by his own intelligence, than to pluck any nut, ripe or unripe, when directed to do so.

Thinking of the incident afterwards, I reflected that I had never before had dealings with a commercial monkey.

One afternoon, when I was returning from shooting in the Malay States, I came to the bank of a great river, where three or four Malays were watching one of these same monkeys swimming in a pool of the river, but swimming under water. He looked very strange and I asked what it meant and was told that he had been sent to catch fish. He did not make any bag whilst I was there, but I confess I did not wait long.


. . . . .  
I remember an ancient Dutch fort on a remarkable hill by the mouth of a Malay river which falls into the Malacca Strait. Between the foot of the hill and the sea there was a stretch of tidal swamp covered by mangrove trees. This swamp was infested by wild pigs and as there is not much to be got on a swamp covered, twice in 24 hours, by salt water from a few inches to one or two feet in depth, I asked what the pigs lived upon and was told that they subsisted mainly on birds. It seemed curious and though I was in the swamp a certain number of times I can't say I ever saw a pig bring down a bird. Still, the story may have been true. What I did see was

*my  
and  
birds*

## DISBELIEF IN THE UNSEEN

hundreds and hundreds of long-legged and short-legged sea-birds walking about in the swamp, and not minding particularly the presence of a stranger. Also there were lots of little bushes for cover, lots of pigs and lots of crocodiles. It is quite likely that the pigs took advantage of their opportunity with the sea-birds, and the crocodiles took advantage of both.

On a mud bank by another river mouth, one hot day at low tide, I saw a large crocodile lying on the mud, with her mouth very wide open and, perched on her nose, was a gigantic sea-bird. It must have been trying to the crocodile to be treated as a mere *point d'appui*, and I felt she was thinking "So near and yet so far." I was much too far off to do any good, but I fired a shot at the crocodile which shut its mouth and shuffled over the mud, while the sea-bird rose slowly into the air flapping great wings.



I used to find it very hard to persuade people to believe that frogs—or toads, I think they are toads, grey and unshiny—will smoke cigarettes. So many unbelievers have seen them doing it that now there must be a fair amount of independent evidence to establish this fact. Once, in the East, I lived in a house with a dining-room on the ground floor, and this room was divided from the large covered porch by a wide verandah.

Both verandah and dining-room were floored with

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tiles covered by matting. I don't think there was a door to the dining-room, if there was it was always wide open, and great pots and jars and stands of plants stood all about carrying the garden into the house. Some time or other I noticed that every night, or certainly every fine night, about the middle of dinner, five or six grey, silently and slowly jumping creatures, came from the porch across the verandah into the dining-room, and sat respectfully in a sort of semi-circle at a little distance from the dinner-table. The attraction may have been the lights and the knowledge that where light is there will the mosquito be also, or it may have been a desire for crumbs or companionship, or just mere curiosity. Anyhow, the creatures came so regularly that we recognised them and gave them friendly names, and they did not seem to mind so much as he did the rough and tumble games which my fox-terrier played with them. I believe some one had told me about the way of a frog with a cigarette and how difficult it was to understand; as Providence seemed to press the opportunity of making the experiment we did not think it ought to be lightly rejected. Therefore one evening, when smoking-time arrived, the largest and boldest of the visitors was persuaded to open his mouth and a newly lighted cigarette was given to him for his very own, while we watched the experiment with curiosity and some anxiety. The frog sat perfectly still without attempting to move and

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smoked the cigarette to—I was going to say to the very end, but that was not so. When the cigarette was almost finished the frog suddenly opened his mouth wide and like a juggler, turned the red end of the cigarette inwards and immediately closed his mouth again.

After sitting still for a little longer, he jumped slowly about and, in due time, took his departure with the others. The first time I saw the final gulp which disposed of the cigarette I thought that might not be good for the frog but, as he always returned the following evening and rather seemed to expect a cigarette, our interest in the entertainment waned while the frogs were still unsatisfied.

. . . . .

I have heard it stated that a wild elephant eats in twenty-four hours his own weight in whatever he can find in the jungle. Whether he accomplishes that feat or not it is certain that he strolls slowly along for a good part of each day and most of each night, breaking branches, tearing leaves, grass and whatever else he fancies, and eating, eating, eating, all the time he is awake. In this process he chews up thick branches and all sorts of vegetable food which must be a severe strain on even such teeth as he can boast. In the lower jaw he carries four of these teeth, two on either side and the same in the upper jaw. As the life of a Malay elephant probably averages something near

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100 years, one set of eight teeth would hardly meet the great beast's necessities. Do you know, or have you ever thought, what happens when an elephant's tooth wears down, gets rickety in its socket and finally, in crunching some tough branch, falls out? How is it replaced? I wonder, because I have never seen any reference to the matter in any book on big-game shooting, and I never met any one who would believe me when I described the boxes of embryo teeth which every elephant carries at each end of his lower jaw. In the top of these tooth-boxes there is a small hole through which it is possible—when the skull has been cleaned and dried—to insert two fingers and pull out three or four embryo teeth. In a large elephant, these teeth are about the size and shape of the four fingers of a hand when the fingers are pressed closely together. I say the lower jaw, because I have never cut into the bone of the upper jaw to see if there is a similar receptacle there. I imagine there must be and that, when a front tooth falls out, the tooth behind moves forward to take its place and one of the embryo teeth drops into position and enters upon its duties as the reserve man joins the colours. I had two elephant skulls in the hall of Government House at Singapore and sometimes, when guests were leaving, I used to show these tooth-boxes and take out a tooth to support my statement. I fancy no one was convinced, and in the stillness of one Eastern night I



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heard, above the noise of carriage-wheels, the voice of a departing guest—a lady—saying to her husband, “surely he does not expect any one to believe that story.”

When I was in the Malay States I stayed, sometimes for days or weeks together, in a most enchanting cottage on a ridge of a great range of hills. The main attraction was the climate of a place 4500 feet above the sea, and an almost complete change in the flora and fauna compared with what was found in the hot plains below. The nights at this cottage were always cool, the thermometer going down to 60° F. or less, and that seems cold when one is used to a temperature 20 degrees higher. In the plains one is struck every moment by the extraordinary fecundity of every kind of life, especially vegetable and insect life and, curiously, most of the insects are things to avoid—so far as they can be avoided. Mosquitoes in tens of millions, ants and flying ants the same, cockroaches in droves, butterflies in clouds, sandflies, wasps, hornets ; there is no end to them. To me, for some reason, the cockroach was the most repulsive of all. At the cottage it was different ; there were none of these things except lovely butterflies and ants, and not many of the latter. I had arrived one afternoon after a long ride up the hill, then an afternoon's hard work, a walk, a tub, and I was dressing for dinner when I saw on the looking-

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glass a creature so strange that for a moment I could hardly believe my eyes. From its size and shape, its flat body, flat wings, doubled-up legs and prominent eyes I imagined it could only be a cockroach, but what was the extraordinary picture it carried on the back of its neck? Apparently this was a thin, partly-transparent oval of some mica-like substance, stuck on the back of the creature's neck and projecting all round from the point of adhesion. The remarkable fact, however, was that on this oval transparency, there was a miniature and, after examining the thing closely, I came to the conclusion that the picture represented the head of a large dog, with heavy hanging ears. I knew all the leaf-insects, and stick-insects, and moss-insects, and even a most remarkable flower-insect, about which I have a tale, but though I had been duly impressed by all of these they were as nothing to this cockroach bearing on its neck the portrait of its grandmother or some more remote ancestor. I was not prepared to touch this uncanny visitant myself, but a Chinese servant secured it, put it in an empty match-box and, in due time, I carried it to the Curator of the Museum, feeling sure I had the missing link. The Curator chilled me by his smile and the assurance that the insect was a cockroach peculiar to that hill, or that elevation, but he did not explain why nature burdened the insect with the miniature which could not mislead an enemy, though it looked unpalatable enough. Still

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if there be any other creature with a stomach strong enough to relish an Eastern cockroach, he would make light of the miniature.

There is nothing marvellous in what I have described and I have confined myself to my own experiences. Little facts of natural history will not satisfy the craving for the supernatural, for things which seem to be contrary to the ordinary laws of nature. Elsewhere I have written of certain things which may be seen in the East by searchers after the occult, things which do not seem capable of any reasonable explanation. For instance I should not like to guess how many times I have been asked whether I had seen "the rope trick," and the inquirers were always full of the keenest desire for a description and an explanation. When I was obliged to confess that I had never seen the trick, and never seen any one else who had seen it, my questioners lost all interest in me, and I failed to re-awaken it by declaring that I knew people whose friends had seen the thing done, and had described it with such gruesome details that, if it could be performed at Olympia in the afternoons and at Covent Garden in the evenings, it would make the fortunes of both those places, and neither Russian dancers nor Miracle Plays would prove a counter-attraction even at popular prices. It seems to me that I have heard of the Indian rope trick almost ever since I was born, but, as actual

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witnesses of the phenomenon are rare, no two accounts of what occurs ever agree. When, therefore, I found an account which purported to come from the lips of an eye-witness I treasured it, because I felt it gave exactly the particulars which alone would satisfy the inquiring mind—particulars which I was unable to supply. Here is the account ; the details are full and exact, they were printed in an Indian newspaper—though I do not remember its name—and the article is even signed by initials—presumably those of the writer. It is difficult to see what more the most sceptical can want, unless it were the name of the place where the deed was done. One can understand why that was not given ; personally, I admire the writer's reticence.

### A WEIRD INDIAN PERFORMANCE

While travelling through the Central Provinces of India last summer, I had the good fortune to be present at a large entertainment given by a wealthy Indian Raja, and during the course of the afternoon went to look at the tricks of a native juggler of great repute, who was performing in the open courtyard before a very large assembly of both Europeans and natives. After having performed the usual sleight-of-hand tricks with cards, balls and rings, common amongst all jugglers of the East, the man announced that he was about to perform the great "basket" trick.

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In the presence of the whole crowd, his only visible assistant a small boy (presumably his son) of about eight or nine years of age was bound hand and foot and placed inside a large square basket, which, after having been carefully locked up, was covered over with a large white cloth. The conjurer then took into his hand a long Indian sword, called a *tulwar*, and made a rapid thrust into the middle of the basket which contained the bound child. A piercing shriek came from inside the basket, and then all was silent. Pausing for a moment, the juggler again thrust his sword right through the basket, and withdrew it covered with blood; this was repeated some four or five times, the sword being thrust into every corner of the basket. The juggler then laid down his weapon and removed the cloth from over the basket; he then again produced the key and requested one of the audience to unlock the basket. One of our number having volunteered his services turned the key and raised the lid, when to our utter amazement the basket was found to be empty, but our astonishment was even greater when the aforesaid little boy was dragged out from under the chair of one of the audience perfectly unharmed. How the boy escaped from the basket when placed there bound, right under the eyes of no less than a hundred spectators, without being seen is too great a mystery for me to try and fathom.

But we were to be still more astonished, for after

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performing a few more ordinary sleight-of-hand tricks, which he did with a neatness unsurpassed by any English conjurer, ancient or modern, he took into his hand a large ball of thin twine, and after having tied one end to his sack, threw the ball into the air with all his strength. Instead of falling the ball seemed to rise in the air, rise slowly till it vanished into the heavens, or rather into the clouds overhead. There were no houses near for it to have fallen into ; and besides, we could see the twine for a great distance straight up in the air. The juggler then ordered the little boy, who had once before helped to astonish us, to mount up the string. Seizing the thin twine with his hands and feet, the little boy climbed up with all the agility of a monkey. Gradually and gradually he grew smaller, till he also like the twine vanished from our eyes. The juggler then took no more notice of him, but proceeded to perform some more minor tricks. After a while he declared that he required his son's help, and called to him to come down. A voice from the air replied that he would not. After trying some persuasion, the juggler got angry and ordered the boy to descend on pain of death. Again having received a reply in the negative, the enraged man seized a long knife and climbed hand over hand up the twine, holding the knife between his teeth, and disappeared, in his turn, like the boy in the blue sky overhead. Suddenly a scream vibrated through the air and, to the unutterable

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horror of the spectators, drops of blood began to fall from the spot where the juggler had disappeared into the sky. Then the boy fell, dismembered—first his legs, then his body, and lastly his head. After his head had touched the ground, the juggler slid down the twine, the knife all bloody at his waist, and leisurely gathered up the members of the child, and placed them together with the twine which he pulled down under a cloth. He then gathered up the rest of his apparatus and removed the sheet. From under it arose up the same identical boy, whole and intact; there were no mangled remains and no blood. On this I will make only one remark, that the thing itself seems impossible, yet that does not prove that it is not actually done. Some may try to find its solution in “Suggestive Hypnotism.” It is true that a hypnotised person sees what his hypnotiser wishes, but is it possible to hypnotise a whole crowd of people? If so, and the crowd immediately proceed to see what the hypnotiser wishes them to see, then of course many of the best Indian wonders in the art of conjuring are explained.

S. W. H.





## THE KRIS INCARNADINE

**T**HERE is no need to remind you that there are traditions of famous weapons all over the world. I can well believe it, for men have been fighting ever since Cain killed his brother ; but, whatever it is elsewhere, and whatever it used to be (for the day of hand-to-hand killing seems wellnigh past), with my masters, the brown-skinned people of the Archipelago, good steel was counted above the price of gold. Amongst the good I was best. Perhaps I am inclined to boast ; but I will tell you the tale, and you shall judge for yourself.

In some Western workshop I first took form as a file, a large, heavy, steel file, and in the days when they began to put fire into ships, to drive them across the sea, I was taken, with many other tools, on board a fire-ship bound for the East. My place was in a rack in the engine-room, and, whenever there was any work to be done, it was soon found that I did it better than the other files ; so, off and on, I was constantly in some man's hand. I know nothing of the ship's purpose and nothing of what took place on board, for I

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lived in the rack, down in the darkness and heat, where nothing greatly varied the monotony of the pounding and vibrating engines which drove the vessel through the waters in fair weather and foul. It is true that sometimes, when we came to a port, the fires were let out, the eternal thump of crank and piston, and the ceaseless splash of paddles, were silent for a time; while drivers and stokers were only too glad to get out of that den of heat and noise, foul smells and fouler words, and leave the voiceless implements of their craft till the time came for a fresh start.

We must have been at sea some months, and have travelled many thousands of miles, when I came by my first experience of fighting. The heat had for weeks been gradually increasing until it affected the temper of almost every one in the engine-room. The white men, who drove the great throbbing machines, and made them go fast or slow, or stopped them altogether, were getting pretty free with their blows to the black stokers and the brown drudges who oiled and cleaned the great wheels and pistons, the cranks, the brasses and tools. Not only were mistakes and neglect sharply visited, but the white men cursed each other, and the black and brown men, under the combined influences of this example, of the heat and of thirst, cursed too, in divers tongues, and the way to bloodshed was straight and easy and inviting.

I learned afterwards that the ship—I never knew her

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name—had reached the China Sea when something happened which changed the whole course of my existence. It was night and dark as pitch ; stifling as before the coming of a violent storm. The waiting was not long, and the storm fulfilled the promise of that space of unnatural calm when the elements had seemed to “ melt with fervent heat.”

I could hear it all as I stood in the rack. First there was a mighty rush of wind which screamed through the rigging and tore the awnings from the ring bolts, sending every loose thing flying. The ship heeled over, one paddle-wheel whirring round in air, so that the hull gave a horrible shudder. There was dead silence for a brief space, and then a flash of lightning that threw blue flame even into our dark tenement. The lightning was accompanied by an almost simultaneous crash of thunder, which drowned the noise of the engines, and this was followed by a bitter storm of pelting-rain—rain that whips, and deluges and drowns, that blinds and makes deaf, that rushes and tears in great sheets or water, beating the sea and scourging the ship till men would fain hide themselves from the fury of its pitiless passion.

I told you that the men's tempers were strung to a high pitch ; days and nights of stifling heat began it, and the thunder-storm was the climax. If I have no nerves of my own, I have lived with those who have them, and I have observed. Men strike for passion

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and they also strike in the anguish of fear. There was the tension of overpowering strain, of an atmosphere charged with electricity, and then the sudden panic-shock when the storm burst in all its sublime but transcendent fury.

The rain fell in torrents, lashing the sea and drowning the ship, while, at short intervals, the electric fluid blazed through the deluge in a stream of horrible light, that only served to blind those on watch. And ever and again the crash and rattle of the thunder seemed to strike the vessel with staggering blows and weakened the knees that made put a poor support to many a trembling heart.

Suddenly the bell of the engine-room rang, and down the tube was shouted, "Stop her!" at once followed by the words "Full speed astern!" A brown man was near the lever, the white driver round on the other side of the machinery. As the latter rushed back to his post, he cried to the drudge, "Stop her!" and, in the second that the brown man seized the lever, there was a horrible grating, crunching noise, followed by a bump that threw down every one who was not holding on to something. The white man sprang up, and, as he passed the rack, he pulled me out, and struck the brown man a crushing blow on the head, under which he sank down on the gratings, a limp unconscious mass. The driver pushed the thing out of his way with his foot, threw me down

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beside the body, and, seizing the lever, reversed the engines.

He was too late. As I lay there, and the brown man's life-blood slowly welled over me, and made a pool on the iron gratings, hoarse voices on deck were shouting orders for boats to be slung out, and the stokers were rushing wildly through the engine-room, up the ladder, away from the fires and the steam, and the water which they heard rushing into the hold of the ship. The white man, realising that the ship was fast upon a rock, and that nothing further could be done with the engines, opened the steam-pipe and started for the ladder. Then he stopped, looked round and turned back to the brown man. He caught him by the arm, but the limpness of the body told its tale, and after one glance at the face he dropped the arm and made for the ladder, wiping his fingers on the bundle of waste which he held in his hand.

For some time I heard a great commotion on deck—shouts, orders, hurrying to and fro, and I realised that the boats were being lowered and preparations made for leaving the ship. I understood the reason. The vessel was hard on the rocks with a great rent in her bottom, through which the waters of the sea had burst tumultuously and were now gradually filling the hold and rising high in the after part of the ship. The storm of rain was abating, the wind was going down,

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but the vessel, for sea-going purposes, was lost, and the Malays of the Archipelago and the Peninsula had such an evil reputation for piracy, plunder and murder, that the ship's company were not likely to wait on board a wreck for daylight and its probable dangers. An open boat, in calm weather, would not take long to reach Singapore, and that would seem better than being caught, like rats in a trap, by the inhabitants of the island, people who would regard the accident as a dispensation of Providence for their benefit, and show scant ceremony if it came to dealing with any one who stood between them and the many useful things to be found on the wreck.

After a time, some hours perhaps, there was silence, and I knew that the only semblance of humanity on the ship was that stiffening thing that lay close by me and had lately been a man. The rain ceased altogether, the wind died away, the storm was spent; the fires were drowned by the water, which had risen to the floor of the engine-room, and the only sound was the lapping of the sea against the sides of the vessel as she stood impaled on the sharp rock.

The dawn began to break. I watched the grey lights creep brokenly across the bright steel of the engines and define, first a beam, then a cylinder, a piston-rod, a slide, till the dead thing took form, and the sticky wetness, in which I lay, took colour.

Presently I heard the measured sound of oars, the

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bump of a boat against the side of the ship, then voices and the soft tread of naked feet. Again, the splash of oars and paddles, more bumps, more voices, and in time some dark men slowly descended the ladder, entered the engine-room, found the body of the dead engine-hand, turned it over, realised the manner of its death, and seeing me lying there in the clotting blood, picked me up and carried me on deck with other files and engine tools.

Then I saw that we had struck on the outlying rocks of a large island, a place of lofty, green, forest-covered hills ; while away on the right was a beautiful bay, half-circled by a beach of yellow sand, which divided the waters of the sea from a grove of coconuts. Under the shadow of the palms were a few brown huts, and thither I was presently carried, by the delighted wreckers, with many another prize. I saw no trace of the steamer's crew ; they must have got away, in the darkness, with what they could carry.

It appeared that I was the prize of a famous smith, a maker of weapons, and especially of the Malay dagger called a "kris." For his purposes nothing was better than a good, heavy engine-room file, one that had been well-used, for choice. After he had looked through his spoil, the rewards of his quest and superior knowledge, he selected me as suitable material ; first, because I was well-used and his practised eye saw that I was good stuff ; secondly, because I had already

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killed a man, and that gave promise for the future ; and thirdly, because, when he tried to wash me clean of those crimson stains, there remained one spot that resisted his efforts and remained incarnadine.

The maker of daggers worked on me for many days, thrusting me into his charcoal forge, blowing up the fire with a strange double current of air from two little bamboo blast-pumps, and then, after much welding and beating on his anvil, plunging me into a bamboo vessel, filled with oil and various ingredients supposed to be specially good for tempering steel. At first he noticed nothing strange, and, following the precepts or old time, he fashioned a blade which, wide and thick at the hilt, waved in five "bays" or curves, gradually thinning and tapering as it went, till at last it ran out in one long, narrow sweep to the point. There was a round prong to fit into the wooden handle, as in all Malay daggers, and, as is sometimes the custom with the cunning sword-smiths of Celêbes, he worked the base of the blade into the likeness of a dragon, a dragon with open mouth and slender tongue of steel. The centre of the blade, from base to point, was covered with a quaint damascening, showing threads and splashes of silver, and this was bordered by two ribbons of dull grey steel, keen as razors, with a faint watering of finest parallel lines, which followed the twists of the weapon, and looked like tiny cloudlets deepening into the darker greyness of the sinuous, highly-tempered edge.



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Five fingers' breadth from the point (just where the smith had failed to rub out the stain in the file) there was a dark spot on both sides of the blade, and, as the final cleanings were done, and the dagger appeared in all its beauty of design and cunning of workmanship, the spot stood out blood-red against the grey background. When held in a particular light the illusion was such that the stain seemed even wet, so that a man would try to put his finger on it to see if it were not really blood.

It was that strange birth-mark, that silent witness of the engine-room tragedy, which gained for me the name of "The Kris *běr-dârah*,"<sup>1</sup> and, as the people of the island began—with the change of monsoon and the coming of fair weather—to visit the mainland, there was a good deal of talk of this latest creation of Tûkang Bûrok, the famous fashioner of the snake-like kris. In time the tale reached the ear of the Sultan to whom the island belonged, and, when he had heard all that could be said by the jealous, the spiteful and the marvel-tellers, he sent a message to Tûkang Bûrok summoning him to come into the presence, and to bring the "kris *běr-dârah*." Tûkang Bûrok obeyed, as how should he not; but it was with misgivings that he received the message, which he knew meant the loss of his darling, if no worse should befall him. Like all true artists, he valued his creation more than any

<sup>1</sup> Blood-stained.

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stranger could, for he knew that it was the best work he had ever done, and the stain, the crimson blot that sometimes looked like wet blood—well, that was magic, it was fate, it was fame—it would carry his name, through ages and generations, wherever the Malay language was spoken.

Tûkang Bûrok had made a beautiful scabbard from the heart of the *kamûning* tree—a fitting casket for the jewel that he had determined no money should buy from him. A handle, too, he had fashioned, a handle of ivory, wrought cunningly into the likeness of a bird's head and neck, the form of kris-hilt handed down, as the Malays say, from "the time of the first day." Then, in obedience to the Sultan's command, he sailed across the sea in a little boat with his son—a boy in his teens, and on a morning when an opal haze hung over the water, the palm-fringed shore, and the picturesque village spread along the sweeping curve within a wide river's mouth, they tacked slowly into the haven and made fast to the rude landing-stage.

The smith landed with his son, and, having stated his business, was told to call at the Sultan's audience hall a little before noon. This he did, and found his royal master sitting, with a few of his chiefs and henchmen, on the raised dais just outside the curtain that hung over the door into "the Within," where dwelt the Sultan's wives and all his women folk. The smith

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made obeisance and sat down afar off, on the lowest step of the audience hall, the kris carefully covered by the skirt which every Malay wears over his trousers, and which reaches from waist to knee. The smith's child also made obeisance and sat down behind his father.

Presently the Sultan called, "Is that Tûkang Bûrok?" and the smith answered, "It is your Highness's slave."

"Approach!" said the Sultan, and the smith humbly drew himself to a place near his master, but still beneath him.

The Sultan desired him to come up on to the same level with himself, and finally Tûkang Bûrok squatted on the floor within a few feet of his lord. But the boy remained on the bottom step below the dais.

After some questions as to when the smith arrived, how long the voyage had taken, and what weather he had had, the Sultan said :

"Hast thou brought the kris?" And the smith replied, "It is here, your Highness."

"Give it," said the Sultan ; "we wish to see it. The report is that the kris is a marvel."

"Thy servant's work is indifferent," said the smith, "but by God's grace the kris is not a very bad one. Have I your Highness's permission?" he added, as he put his hand to his waist. The Sultan signified his consent, and Tûkang Bûrok slowly uncovered the hilt

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of the kris, drew from his belt the weapon (still in its scabbard), and, leaning forward till he was almost prostrate, presented it with the handle towards the Sultan.

The Sultan took it, looked at the scabbard and the handle, and then slowly drew the blade from the sheath and gazed long and earnestly at it, holding it in different lights and different positions to see all its points.

As he realised the marvellous perfection of the design, the admirable balance, the wonderful damascening of the blade, the cunning fashion of the dragon at the base, the graceful curves and the long, clean run to the point, a hungry look of exceeding avarice and cruelty came into his eyes, and his hand involuntarily closed tightly on the hilt in a grip that told me he did not mean to let me go.

"What is this red mark?" he said. "Some cunning trick of yours, we suppose."

"Nay, your Highness," said the smith, "it is none of my making, it came like that of itself."

"A lie!" said the Sultan, "but though your name is bad"—for "Bûrok" means damaged—"the kris is well enough. What is the price of it?"

"A thousand pardons, your Highness," said the smith, who knew that the evil moment had come, "your slave had no intention of selling the kris."

"Ah, you dog!" said the Sultan, in fury of real desire and simulated anger, "you do not want to

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sell? Then you shall not. You bastard ! you dare to make a weapon and try to hide it from your master ? But you shall never make another, and we will see whether you are such a clever smith as you pretend.” With that the Sultan sprang up and drove me straight into Tûkang Bûrok’s throat, down through bone and muscle, till the point of the blade must have reached the smith’s heart. He gasped out, “God ! my lord, God Almighty !” and fell forward on his face with a horrible gurgle of blood-choking in his throat.

Every one had jumped to his feet, and, as they raised Tûkang Bûrok, the Sultan, with some difficulty, pulled me out of the body, and a great stream of blood gushed on to the floor and dyed the boards with the colour of my name.

“It is a good weapon, after all,” said the Sultan, with a chuckle, as he picked up the sheath and retired behind the curtain. There he carefully cleaned the blade, and expressed great astonishment and delight at the fact that the crimson stain shone brighter than ever against its silver-grey background.

No one had noticed the boy, the smith’s son ; but when he saw his father murdered, he had run out of the hall and courtyard sobbing as though his heart would break. Presently, those about the Sultan remembered him, and asked their master what should be done with the child and his father’s boat. His Highness generously consented to make use of both,

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and the boy was ordered into the King's household to hew wood and draw water and make himself generally useful. But the Sultan carried me in his girdle by day, placed me by his pillow at night, and never ceased to sing my praises and make opportunities for trying my penetrating powers on those of his subjects whom he desired to get rid of.

To describe my existence while I remained in the possession of the Sultan would be to catalogue a long list of revolting murders. If you know the life of an independent Malay Raja of evil tendencies, you will understand the circumstances under which he personally uses a weapon on his subjects in time of peace; if you don't, what I have told you of the death of the smith is sufficient, without my enlightening you further. My release came about through the boy. Tûkang Bûrok's son, mindful of his father's death and eager for a vengeance which all his traditions forbade him to exact, waited till he had grown to be a man, and then stole me, the Kris Incarnadine, and after many perils and adventures made his way through the jungles of the Peninsula, across the pathless hills and swamps, to the country of the wild people, and thence to the states bordering the western shores of Malaya. Burdened by the knowledge of my now widespread fame, fearful of the consequences to himself should his identity be recognised by the weapon he carried, and driven to

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desperation by poverty, he sold me to a Celêbes chief, an exile from his own country, with a record likely to induce him to make the most of his bargain and keep his own counsel as to what he had secured and its value.

I was not sorry for the change or ownership. For though I hated being used as a butcher's knife to slaughter the defenceless, and had rejoiced to find myself in the possession of the son of the man who had expended all his skill in fashioning me to be a warrior's pride and held of more account than any woman; yet, the boy's hunted life and poor estate deprived me of my birthright, sentenced me to a mean and wretched existence, wherein I counted for little and was often for days and weeks allowed to rust in my sheath.

The Buggis man (that is what the Malays call the people of Celêbes) took a pride in me and appreciated my value, though he did not know my name or history. Neither by day nor night was I ever separated from him; for, in the daytime, he carried me in his belt, and at night I lay beside his pillow, ready to his hand.

One night, my new owner was sleeping in the house of a district chief whose guest he was, as were others not in any way connected with him. It was a time of trouble, and the air was full of rumours of fighting, our host barricading his house every night. It was a

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large house, with many rooms, for the owner was the principal chief in that neighbourhood. The people of the house were many ; men and women, boys and girls, but principally girls, who did all the house-work of their feudal chief and his wife. The men and the boys went and came, and, from the talk of the mistress, I understood that they had charge of some valuable mines at a little distance. But the girls were always there, busy about the house-duties, looking after children, making mats, embroidering pillows, and waiting upon the guests. Some of them were well-favoured, some ill, but there was one who, according to Malay ideas of beauty, was a pearl, a fragrant blossom, a heart's delight and despair. The guests were also many and they often succeeded each other ; but, whether they travelled by road or river, they all gravitated towards this house at the hour of the evening meal, and then, Malay-like, they would talk far into the night of fights and weapons, of women and money, until, in sheer exhaustion, they lay down with a pillow and mat on any vacant space of floor, and slept ; grunting and moaning, snoring and mumbling in their dreams, till day dawned.

We had been in the house for three or four days, and, amongst others, there was a young fellow of some authority, with a swaggering manner and a facile tongue, who talked to the old lady of the house the while he was ogling her most ravoured attendants.



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He seemed to be a favourite, for, one night when every one was getting ready for sleep, the hostess gave up her bed to him and went elsewhere ; while, of the rest, my master, the Buggis, was the only one who remained in the room, and he slept on a mat on the floor, his head on a pillow, after placing me close beside him, on the mat, ready for instant use.

It must have been in the first or second hours of the new day, when the snores of some of the many sleepers in different parts of the house were the only sounds to break the stillness, that the patch-work curtain, surrounding the great square bed-place of our hostess, was slowly lifted, and the guest, to whom it had been allotted, emerged noiselessly and then stood still, looking round the room, which was vaguely lighted by a tiny wick swimming in a vessel of oil.

He stood there for a long moment, searching the room with his eyes till they fell upon me. Then he crept forward, and, regarding my master carefully the while, he took me up and drew me slowly and noiselessly from the sheath. I wondered what he could want with me at the dead of night ; I wondered what my master would do if he saw that man standing by his head with his own naked kris in his hand, and I saw how easy it would be to kill the Buggis as he lay there, should the stranger desire it. Evidently that was not his intention, for, with the same precautions, and without any hurry, he returned whence he had come,

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raised the heavy arras, stooped under them and passed in. As the gaudily-coloured folds of stuff fell into their places, the stranger dropped on his knee beside the handsome girl, whom I had already observed as the favourite of the mistress of the house. The girl was locked in that profound sleep wherein respiration seems almost to cease, and not the slightest movement stirred the sleeper.

Again I wondered, what could the man want with *me*? Still, I had not lived all those years in the Sultan's Astána without learning something, and I saw that, if there was to be any killing, the stranger had come unprepared; for there was no weapon within the curtains but the one he held in his hand.

The man listened to the girl's hardly perceptible breathing for a while, and looked fixedly at her. She wore, as was the custom of that country, a short silk jacket with tight sleeves, and a pair of loose trousers, things seldom or never worn in the house. Thrown negligently over her was the silk *sarong* or skirt, the garment common to both men and women. Except for the girl's regular breathing there was not a sound inside the curtain; but occasionally the faintly-sounding movements of a restless sleeper came, half-smothered, from without. The stranger stooped down close over the girl, and put the fingers of his left hand under a silken cord, tied so tightly that it cut into her waist. Then, very carefully, to avoid cutting himself or her,

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he took me by the blade, near the point, in the fingers of his right hand, and getting the kris under the cord —by raising it with two fingers of his left hand—the razor-like edge severed it in an instant, and at the same moment the sleeper awoke.

I was outraged. Was I a pair of scissors to be used for cutting thread? Was it for this that Tûkang Bûrok had fashioned me and then paid for his labour with his own life? Why did not my master wake and strike this man, as the Sultan struck the unoffending smith? Alas! I could not shout for help, and, though the girl seemed to want it, and fought desperately, she uttered no cry, only struggled to get free from the man who seemed at last to lose his temper, and, seizing me by the hilt, placed the point close to her heart and threatened to kill her if she were not quiet. Either she did not believe him, or she did not care, for she wriggled out of his grasp and, lifting the far side of the curtain, disappeared into the women's apartment, where he dared not follow her.

The stranger threw himself on the mattress exhausted by the struggle; but, as he regained his composure, he looked at me in a pensive, *distracted* fashion, and smiled as he swore gently under his breath. Then he lay down and slept; but at dawn, before the Buggis was awake, he took me back and put me in my sheath again.

We left the place for my master's village, two hundred miles nearer the coast, but about a month later,

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when my master was going up river, we met the stranger being paddled down stream, and, as the boats passed each other, I saw that same girl look out of the after-house window of his boat, and smile as she said something to her companion. I think she was reminding him of the evening when he borrowed me. One sees as much, and may learn as much, on that western waterway, as in the Astâna of an East Coast Sultan.

After a time, white men came into the Peninsula and made trouble, so that the Buggis determined to leave the place. Just before his departure, a boy who had seen me, and thought I was too good for a foreigner, appropriated me and made his way back to the up-country fastness where he dwelt.

Years passed and my new owner quarrelled with a Javanese, stabbed him to death and fled into the jungle. No one cared much, and as the boy had many powerful relatives he managed to evade capture. But he was married, and though he was a proclaimed outlaw, his young wife remained in her husband's house in the centre of a considerable village. The husband used to appear at unexpected moments and demand food and shelter, and, when his wants had been satisfied, he remained in the house till he was warned that further delay would cost him his liberty. The absences were long, the moments passed with his wife brief, and the outlaw became suspicious of the girl's fidelity. Perhaps the poisonous breath of gossip penetrated to his uncertain

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hiding-places, perhaps jealousy alone was responsible, or perhaps, having little else to do, he acted as his own detective and made some discovery. Whatever the cause the village awoke one day to the knowledge that the man had murdered his wife and left a message with some wanderer, whom he met by the way, to the effect that there were twelve people in the neighbourhood whose lives he meant to take. As a curious instance of the panic that one desperate man may cause, it is a fact that, from this time forward, the people of the village would not go about singly, and all the houses were shut and barricaded at four o'clock in the afternoon. The two murders following on each other so quickly, the outlaw's boastful threat, and the report that he was armed with a wonderful kris, caused the same paralysing fear as the knowledge that an *âmok*-runner is abroad, ready to slay whomsoever shall cross his path.

The feelings of a large section of the villagers were, however, affected by the fact that the murdered girl had many relatives, and these, indifferent, or even sympathetic, to a man who had only slain a stranger, desired vengeance for the blood of their kinswoman. Therefore the people of the district herded together to seek the murderer, and beat the jungle for him as they would for a man-eating tiger, but without result. Then the white men, who, by this time controlled the government of the country, took the case up and warned

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the native headmen that they would be held responsible if the murderer were not arrested within a given time. The headmen appeared to be very zealous in the pursuit, and scoured the country with hundreds of armed followers, but found no trace of the man who had caused all this commotion.

It may have been that some more powerful native authority had issued secret instructions to search the least likely coverts ; it may have been that none of the searchers particularly relished the idea of meeting a desperate and well-armed man. Whatever the cause, the murderer was still at large when the services of a foreign Malay, of rank and tried courage, were enlisted to do what the people of the country could not or would not accomplish.

This stranger took with him only two followers, and, going straight to the village where the murderer's house was situated, they quietly obtained the information they wanted, and in twenty-four hours were hot on the trail of the outlaw. My latest master had discovered a deserted hut in a patch of bananas, surrounded by dense forest, unknown to almost every one, but still at no great distance from the scene of his last crime. There he had dwelt in hiding ever since he murdered his wife, but, even then, his whereabouts were known to some of his own family, who supplied him with food, though they held no intercourse with him beyond telling him of the intentions

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and exploits of the great search parties, whose half-hearted schemes he easily baffled. When the foreign Raja took up the trail the affair assumed a different complexion. His inquiries were conducted mainly through foreign Malays, his following was small, his movements rapid, his object fixed and unwavering, his courage of the highest order, and he kept his own counsel. Therefore it happened that, as my master was sitting at sundown, within the open door of the hut, his body hidden, but his legs visible in the doorway, he was startled by hearing a voice in the banana patch call him by name, saying, "Come out, it is I, Raja Radin, who am waiting for you." My master seized a pair of spears that were leaning against the wall and rushed down the steps to the ground.

At a distance of only a few yards, right in the path leading to the door, stood Raja Radin, who had not even drawn the kris he carried in his belt. Behind him were two followers, one armed with a gun and the other with a spear.

My master ran straight at the Raja, casting a spear which the other avoided. Then, with the second spear in both hands, the assailant thrust with all his might at the Raja, but the blade passed through his trousers and the force of the ineffective blow brought the outlaw to his knee. As Raja Radin grasped the shaft of the spear, the outlaw whipped me from my sheath but, before he could strike, one of the men

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behind the Raja thrust his spear over his chief's shoulder and the point entering my master's neck thrust him back on to the ground. Almost at the same moment the man with the musket fired, and the bullet, striking the outlaw fair in the chest, killed him almost instantly. The Raja, who had never drawn his kris, was very angry with his followers, saying, he meant to take the outlaw alive and would have done so if they had shown a little more courage. As it was, there was nothing to be done but to carry the body to the nearest police station, the Raja possessing himself of the dead man's kris.

Thus I changed hands again, and I was not sorry to be in such good keeping, for there are few men, white or brown, with a stouter heart than little Raja Radin, of Sumatra.

It was very Malay-like that when the dead man's body was carried, next morning, to the police station, the Raja and his two followers were scowled at by every man and boy in the crowd of Malays who collected round the little procession. Had it not been for the Raja's personal reputation, his recent exhibition of prowess, and the knowledge that the Government was behind him, I think there would have been more blood shed on that day.

Raja Radin, like every other fighting Malay that I have ever seen, suffered from a permanant state of impecuniosity, and before twelve months had passed



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he sold me to a white man, saying that, since Malay rule was over, a kris was more or less of a useless luxury, and the one he had worn for so many years would serve him to the end.

So I came to be a white man's plaything ; not that he used me ill ; he did not cut cake with me, or lay me on the floor for dancers to caper over, as I have seen other white men do with their dishonoured blades. My complaint was that he did not use me at all. I was cared for, and honoured, and made much of, and my latest owner would draw me from the sheath and praise my virtues as though he were a Malay. But for all that, I lay upon the table, where I never heard the sound of voices raised in anger, or saw the blood-light darken any man's eye.

And now, once again, I have found a new home : for the white man has given me to a white woman. I have seen her and I am glad. For all her fair face, and pretty child-like ways, it will go ill with any one who really angers her, if I am within her reach. And she is a woman over whom, unless I am mistaken, many a man has lost his head and some their lives. The measure is not yet full ; for though many have sought, none has been chosen, so there has been no betrayal. With trust there is always the possibility of betrayal, and with betrayal will come my opportunity.



## MALAY SPORTS

**I**F ever there can be true sport in the fighting of animals, whose natural inclination to disorder is encouraged by training, then a bull-fight in the Malay State of Kelantan is sport.

I have described in another book how Kelantan looks to the visitor from oversea, and as I wrote it on the spot I venture to quote the description here.

“Kelantan is a sunny country on the East Coast of the Malay Peninsula, six degrees north of the Equator. It is drained by a considerable river, shallow throughout its length, with a delta and several mouths, whose position is constantly changed by the rush of the China Sea battling, for six months of the year, against the outcoming water and a sandy shore. Twelve miles up the river, on its right bank, is a considerable Malay town, with over ten thousand inhabitants, ruled by a Malay Sultan and his various chiefs, all of whom are settled in houses of some pretension in and about Kota Bharu.

The people of this place have certain peculiar customs, of which it may be mentioned that, though they are

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Muhammadans, the women move about as freely as the men. They mind the shops and deal with customers; they weave the silk *sarongs* for which Kelantan is famous; and they do as much carrying and marketing, gossip and field-work, as their fathers, husbands, brothers and lovers. That is one striking peculiarity of the place; and another is that Kota Bharu is given up to various forms of relaxation in a way unknown in any other State in the Malay Peninsula. There is the season for bull-fights and the season for ram-fights; the boat-racing season, the cock-fighting season, and the season when every one who is any one goes down to the mouth of the river, camps on the great stretches of sand which divide the fresh waters of the river from the salt waters of the sea, and there they disport themselves after their own fashion. The occasion of this festival for sea-bathing, boat-sailing, fish-catching, and general junketing is the close of the North-East Monsoon, when the China Sea ceases to lash itself furiously against the East Coast. When its mighty roar dwindles down to the cooing of the tiny silver-crested waves, and the people of the land feel that they are no longer prisoners; they can set their red and white and orange and chocolate coloured sails and skim out over the gleaming waters to wooded islands and deep-sea fishing-grounds. There are few more fascinating pictures than the Kelantan fishing-fleet, in all the glory of strange hulls, mat and cloth sails of every hue and

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quaint design, standing out to sea from the river mouth at daybreak. The sun, just rising above the horizon, and throwing shafts of light through the rising mist, across the silver-grey of the waveless sea ; the boats, several hundreds in number, gliding in a fairylike procession, from closest foreground to the utmost limit of vision. They make a marvellous study in colour and perspective ; and parallel with the line of their noiseless progress lies the shore—a long stretch of grey-green wood and yellow sand, divided from the sea by a narrow ribbon of white wave.

That is Kelantan from the sea. Twelve miles or clear island-studded river, winding between rice-fields and palm-groves dotted at intervals by cottages and homesteads of dark timber with thatched roofs, form the highway from the *Kuala*, or river mouth, to the Capital. The Sultan's *Astâna* or palace, with its dependencies, surrounds on three sides a court of sand, which is closed on the fourth by a wooden palisade with one great central gate flanked by smaller gates to right and left of it. A second, and similar, set of gates forms a further enclosure, about a hundred yards nearer the river. From these outer portals a long straight road stretches to the river and, on occasions of great ceremony, the visitors whom the Sultan delights to honour will find this road lined, on both sides throughout its entire length, by spearmen, while the principal chiefs and a great posse of retainers, escort

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the guests from the landing-stage to the Hall of Audience, where the Sultan receives them."

I am not concerned here with Kelantan politics, only with two of its many forms of entertainment, bull-fighting and cock-fighting.

There is a field, about half a mile out of town, where bull-fights usually take place; but the arena chosen, on the occasion here described, was the open space between the inner and outer gates of the Sultan's domain. This space, about a hundred yards by fifty, is partly sand and partly grass; it is enclosed by buildings, and there are several fine trees on one side of it from the branches of which the Kelantan boys watch with keenest interest the struggles of the combatants. An immense crowd of Malays, the Sultan, all his chiefs, the swordbearers, the spearmen and probably three hundred men and boys with a few women in the background, lined the four sides of the arena in closely packed masses; while a few Sikhs were much in evidence making officious attempts to keep the ground clear, and so gain points of special vantage for themselves. The Sultan and his party occupied a platform at one end of the ground, and this was hastily railed in to protect the spectators from possible rushes of the bulls.

Two bulls were then led on to the ground, by short ropes attached to their nostrils, and arrangements were at once made for matching them. One was a famous

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beast, the victor in many previous battles ; but the other, apparently rather the heavier, had only fought once before. Each bull was accompanied by four men, who were privileged to follow their champions during the fight, to encourage them to greater efforts, and when a bout was over, to secure their charges and lead them away. The bulls belong to a local breed, small in size but sturdy, well built, and very quick in movement. They all have a small hump on the neck, short sharp horns, and are usually black or black with white legs, but reddish-brown is not an uncommon colour. Promising looking steers are trained for fighting from early youth, and put into the ring from the age of three years. They are supposed to be at their best when four to five years old. Bulls, of as nearly as possible the same size and weight, are generally matched to fight, and considerable sums are staked on the result. When once the beasts have been let go the fight continues till one turns tail and leaves the field. Sometimes one declines the combat altogether, and rushes away incontinently the moment he is faced by his adversary. The victor then performs a strange sort of war-dance, alone ; whirling round and round, tossing his head, bellowing and snorting as though he were possessed and finally dashes off in pursuit of the enemy, utterly demoralising the crowd of spectators, who fall over each other in their anxiety to get out of his dangerous path. Usually there is a fight, more or less

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prolonged, and, when at last one bull gives way and runs from the field, he is followed, caught, and brought again to face his adversary. If he engages again, well and good, the fight continues ; but, if he does join issue, the second bout rarely lasts any time and the beaten bull again saves himself by flight. That settles the matter as far as backers are concerned, and the bets are paid. It very seldom happens that a bull is killed, or is even seriously injured.

So much by way of general explanation ; it will help the reader to understand the details of this particular battle. As soon as the bulls arrived on the ground they were inspected at close quarters by the connoisseurs and backers, and while the four setters-on gave the last touches to their champions, took the covers from the points of their horns and rubbed off the oil with which they had been smeared, squeezed a lemon on to their noses and tongues, and tickled their backs and sides, the bets were made and deposited with the stakeholder.

Choice of position was decided by drawing one or two blades of grass held in the umpire's hand, the owner who drew the short blade taking the up-stream position for his beast, while the other bull faced him from down-stream. The eight setters-on then brought their respective bulls close up, to have a good look at each other. Having slowly passed and being about ten yards apart, face to face, the leading ropes were suddenly cast off, and the bulls, dashing at each other

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with fury, met head to head with a resounding thud. In a second their horns were interlocked, and each was trying, by every ruse and device, to drive the other back on his haunches or throw him over by main force.

The combatants moved but little, with heads down, forehead to forehead, horns locked, fore legs spread out and hind legs tucked in, each bull exerted all his might to overpower the other by weight and strength. In their efforts their faces were sometimes on the ground, the four horns rising as it were from the grass. Then one would lift the other's fore legs right off the ground. A moment later the horns would be disengaged to find a new and better purchase ; and so, first one then the other would gain a slight advantage, and both bulls would move this way and that, from centre to side of the arena and back again, without any distinct advantage to either beast.

The Eastern is supposed to be a being who seldom gives way to the demonstrative expression of emotion ; but while this bull-fight continued and the combatants fought strenuously for the mastery, never for one instant relaxing their exertions, the multitude of Malay spectators yelled themselves hoarse with shouts or encouragement and approval, and the eight henchmen, half mad with excitement, simply danced round the contending bulls. The varying tide of battle had carried the beasts into the centre of the arena, and the

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novice, who for the last few minutes had contented himself with simply resisting the attacks of his antagonist, now made his great effort. Pressing irresistibly forward, he brought his greater weight so to bear that at last his adversary was forced back a few inches. Another effort and another, and then, gathering himself together, he rushed the expert back, and the latter's hind legs giving way under the pressure, he was thrown on his side and the other was upon him, butting at him unmercifully with his short, sharp pointed horns. The old hand was beaten; but gathering himself together, he recovered his legs and disappeared amidst a scene of the wildest excitement, men shouting and waving their headkerchiefs, and boys turning cartwheels and otherwise expressing their delight all over the arena. The excitement did not last more than a minute, and then every one was sitting down sedately, quietly discussing what was held to have been a great fight. It had lasted about twenty minutes. The comparative silence which ensued was broken by a dull thud as a boy, about ten years old, fell flat on the ground from one of the higher branches of a tree. Fortunately for him he found a soft landing-place, for he fell on a heap of chips and sawdust at the foot of a great tamarind tree. Three men were squatting in a row with their backs against the tree, and the boy fell about six inches in front of their noses; but none of the three, or the dozens of other

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men standing within a few feet of the place, took the slightest notice, and the boy got up unaided. He did not make any remark, but he looked considerably scared, and as soon as he began to walk several men felt him all over to see if any bones were broken. As he seemed quite sound no one took any further interest in the matter. This impassiveness was the more striking after the recent outburst of wild excitement.

The beaten bull appeared just then, but as he declined to face his late adversary he was led away, the bets were paid, and every one sat down to wait for another match. The wait was a long one, the whole entertainment having been improvised at short notice; but at last two new bulls, one black, the other black with white face and legs, were led into the arena. The usual preliminaries having been settled, in the usual dilatory fashion, the beasts were let go, and the first onslaught was sensational; for in the space of about a minute the white-legged bull threw his opponent, and then gored him in the belly time after time. The horns, though sharp enough, are short, and as the thrown bull hit out mightily with his legs, he managed to protect himself so far that he only received skin wounds, while his hoof ripped his adversary's ear, tearing it in two.

After a few moments of unequal fight, in which it seemed every instant that the bull on his back must be disembowelled, he struggled to his feet and at once

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rejoined issue by charging his enemy. The combatants, now face to face with locked horns, swayed hither and thither over the ground till the white-legged bull, with an irresistible rush, carried his antagonist completely off his feet and again threw him, following up his advantage by a series of violent attempts to disembowel him. Although no serious wound was inflicted the black bull was completely demoralised and, scrambling to his feet, he dashed from the field through a crowd of spectators and found safety in flight, while the immense concourse of spectators screamed themselves silly with delight. The runaway was duly secured and led back into the arena, where the battle was resumed for a moment; but the black fought half-heartedly and, quickly disengaging, he executed a flank movement at a very good pace, scattering the crowd; passing through the outer gates and heading straight for the country.

The flight of the beaten bull concluded the afternoon's entertainment; and, as the setting sun cast long shadows from palm and building, the crowd of sightseers, in all the bravery of their silk attire, a very galaxy of colour, broke into rainbow-hued groups, then faded silently away.

Cock-fighting, *Měny-âbong ayam*, like many other ancient Malay customs, is no longer the fashion, and one must travel far a-field to see the so-called sport. It has gone with the carrying of the *Kris*, the blacken-

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ing and filing of the teeth, the wearing of quaintly-cut garments and grotesquely-tied headkerchiefs. Betel-chewing, opium smoking, and gambling die harder, but are on the wane.

The amusements of the Malay were never confined to cock-fighting, but a hundred, fifty, or even thirty years ago it had a great vogue, especially with the upper classes. Malays will name to you this or that Sultan, Raja, or Chief—now long dead and gone—who, in his day, was an inveterate cock-fighter, and perhaps even a famous *Juâra*, or “setter-on.” But all this is changed. In British territory cock-fighting is forbidden, in the States under British protection it is forbidden or discountenanced, and those outside the pale are prone to imitate the fashions of those who are supposed to set them. All this is very encouraging to those who have the reformation of the Malay at heart, and to describe cock-fighting to-day is rather like dabbling with the Black Art.

The ground on which the game used to be played was usually an open space in front of the Raja's dwelling. Special patrons of the sport sometimes put a palm-leaf roof over the battle-ground, but usually there was no such covering. It is necessary that the ground should be hard and even, not grass nor sand, but firm level clay. The spectators squat in a ring, round a fair space, in which the birds are allowed to do their worst. This ground, or cock-pit, is called

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*galenggang ayam*. The first thing to be done is to match two cocks, a very long business as a rule, called in Malay *běrpâdan ayam*. Those interested weigh the birds in their hands, study their respective heights and points, and talk, talk as only those with whom time is nothing but a thing to kill can talk.

The common practice is for owners to make a match for a certain stake, but it is also by no means uncommon for a man to borrow a bird from a bystander and fight it on terms to be agreed upon. Usually the owner is a poor man who has no money with which to back his bird, therefore he lends it on condition that the borrower lets him have a share in the stake. If the bird wins the owner wins his share, but if the bird is killed there is an end of the matter; or, but less frequently, the owner lends his bird for a consideration, which is paid whether the cock wins or loses.

When a match has been arranged, a question of the first importance is how the artificial spurs are to be tied. If the cocks are of equal weight and height, the spurs are tied in the same place, on the left leg or foot of each bird. If one bird is bigger than the other the chances of the pair are made even by tying the spur higher up the leg of the larger bird. There are four methods of tying. (1) *Bûlang gôlok*: where the spur is tied to the foot, between the small upper claw and the outside claw. The point of the spur is

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turned slightly upwards, and the thread, with which it is tied, is always carried upwards. This position of the spur is supposed to give the bird the greatest advantage. (2) *Bûlang lûar* : where the spur is tied just above the small claw. (3) *Bûlang âtas* : where the spur is tied level with the natural spur. (4) *Bûlang panggang* : where the spur is tied round the leg just above the natural spur. In the last two cases the spur used is slightly curved, in the first two it is straight. The best spurs are Malay, made from old razors ; they are about three inches long, double-edged, and exceedingly sharp. They are so tied that there is about two inches of steel to strike with, and half an inch of the other end projects beyond the front of the bird's foot or leg. If two birds of even weight and height are matched to fight, the spurs may be tied in any of the above ways, as agreed by the owners, so long as the same method is followed with both birds. If one cock is smaller than the other, the spur of the small bird would be tied *bûlang gôlok*, while that of the larger bird would be tied by one of the other methods, as mutually agreed upon, the greater the difference between the birds the higher the spur on the leg of the larger one.

The preliminaries once settled the only people allowed to enter the ring are the starters, called *Juâra*, and those who tie on the spurs. These latter are allowed to stand, and they are usually the owners of

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the birds if the owner is not also the *Juâra*. When the spurs have been tied on—also a very long process with a good deal of unsolicited advice from backers and bystanders—those making the match inspect the birds to see that the spurs have been tied in accordance with agreement. An umpire is then selected, and he also is allowed to enter the arena. The next business is the question of stakes. Either it is a match for an even sum on either side, or the owner, fancier and backers of one bird, put up a certain sum which is covered by a similar sum on the other side and divided by the winners. As a rule, all stakes are deposited in the hands of a stakeholder before the birds are let go, and the money is paid to the winners, or returned in case the fight is drawn—*Sri*—as the Malays call it. It is very unusual indeed to give odds. To make the ordinary bet, which is only paid in case of a win, is called *târoh*, but there is a form of betting called *bûboh* which is the nearest approach to the giving of odds. It implies that the backer is only paid for a win, while he loses his stake, not only if his bird is beaten, but if the fight is drawn.

It is probable that all these preparations will take the best part of an hour, and, everything being settled, the ring or cockpit is left to the two *Juâra* and the umpire. The *Juâra* squat opposite each other, about six feet apart, each holding his bird in the left



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hand, taking great care to keep the formidable spur out of harm's way.

Malays only fight the home-grown cocks—strong, lanky birds as a rule, a good deal bigger than the wild jungle fowl. The breeding of fighting cocks must now be confined to very few places in the Malay Peninsula or Archipelago, but, in former days, it was no doubt universal, and the birds were trained for the fray, practised without spurs, and their legs hardened by rubbing them with the oil of the hard nut tree. This by the way; we left the antagonists, spurred for the fight, in the hands of their *Juâra*. The final ceremony, before setting the birds on, is intended to infuriate the combatants. Each *Juâra*, still squatting, pulls out one or two small feathers growing just above the bird's knee. He also pulls a few feathers from the root of the neck, and perhaps ties one of the tail feathers in a knot, for luck. Then the *Juâra* move close to each other, and, while one holds his bird's head, the other bird gives it a vicious peck, first on one side then on the other. The operation is repeated for the benefit of the adversary, and, the *Juâra* drawing back till there is about six feet between them, let the birds go at the same instant. Sometimes both cocks spring straight into the air, strike each other simultaneously, fall down backwards, give a few kicks and die. In that case the fight is *Sri*, or drawn. Sometimes one springs, the

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other ducks underneath him, turns like lightning, springs and strikes ineffectually, and so the fight continues till one or other, often both, is grievously wounded and cannot move. During the encounter, a *Juâra*, going on all fours, may push his bird toward the other with his head. The operation is not unattended with risk, and it would be possible to name a Chief of some note who nearly lost one eye by trying to execute this manoeuvre. The bird hit out and the spur caught the *Juâra* at the inner corner of the eye and made a deep and ugly wound. It is also within the rules for either *Juâra* to give his bird a pinch at the root of the tail, to urge him forward, but this move is looked upon with considerable suspicion, as the *Juâra* may be tempted to push or lift the bird with his hand, and this is unfair and will certainly lead to trouble. If one cock is dead or dying, and the other either *in extremis* or unhurt, it may be wondered why the combatants should be further worried. The result of the fight and the payment of bets depend, however, on the victor both pecking and striking, or trying to strike, the vanquished with his spur. If he fails the battle is drawn, and all bets, except those already described as *bûboh*, are off. What usually happens is that one bird is killed, and the other is more or less wounded or remains unhurt. The dead bird is then laid on the ground, with his head stretched out, and the other cock

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is brought close up by his *Juâra* and held by his tail. If the live bird then pecks his dead foe, and tries to strike him with the spur, he is declared the victor. If he does neither or only pecks, he is taken back one cubit (18 inches) and given two more chances. Should he still fail to both peck and spur, or attempt to spur, the fight is drawn. To spur is called *mě-lěpar*, it may be done with either foot and, if the cock lifts his foot three fingers' width from the ground, that is enough.

One main is called by the Malays, *Sa-rentang měny-âbong*, two mains *dua rentang* and so on. Ten mains would occupy a whole afternoon, and even in the old days it was unusual to have so many. There is an old Malay saying, the purport of which seems to be that gambling spells ruin, and a Malay of the highest rank, who in his day was a great cock-fighter, said to me that he now regarded the game as both cruel and demoralising, for the Almighty gave life to the birds but men put weapons on their legs and set them to kill each other, simply as a means of indulging their own propensity for gambling. He added that cock-fighting is a sin and forbidden by Muhammadan teaching. Perhaps it is significant that these excellent principles emanated from an aged man who has seen a good deal of the changes and chances of this mortal life. The Malays are a primitive people with few illusions about their own limitations. They do not

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expect extreme moral rectitude in the young, they do not always admire it when met with. But, to the old, a few principles come home, first as a revelation, finally with conviction. The sin of cock-fighting is one of them.

## AN UNSOLVED MYSTERY

**B**EHIND, and very far away from, the sordid crimes of common occurrence in every country, stand out those strange and mysterious tragedies, the cause and explanation of which have passed out of mortal ken. Whilst the moral conscience is horrified by the brutalities of unrestrained passions, the deliberately planned results of robbery with violence, we are quite differently affected by a mystery of which the appalling climax is startlingly evident, but the cause, and even the objects of the actors, baffle all inquiries. Such cases are rare, especially amongst Malays, whose characters are far less complex than those of more highly civilised people. But they do occur, and what follows contains every detail that the most careful inquiry was able to elicit in a fruitless attempt to unravel a very tangled skein. The secret is safe—till the grave gives up her dead, but the story has an interest beyond the bald statement of fact. It has not only the human interest which belongs to every truthful tale of life, but it helps to illuminate the hidden motives which determine

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the actions of Malays in the supreme crises of their lives.

Close by the bank of a Malay river, and not many miles from its mouth; stands a small hill. Years ago the summit of this hill was levelled, and, as the position commanded the river and a small adjoining town, the Malays constructed an earthwork round the level space, mounted guns on the parapet, and occupied the place as a fort. When British influence and protection put an end to the quarrels of local chiefs, this fort offered a convenient site for police barracks, and, amongst other buildings constructed thereon, was a house for a European police-officer.

The house was of wood, with a tiled roof, it had two storeys, and the lower one was floored with red bricks. This ground floor was enclosed by a trellis-work of crossed laths, and the space so enclosed formed the dining and sitting room. On either side of a passage—leading from the dining-room to the kitchens and servants' quarters—were bath-rooms; a small office, with walls of weather-boarding, had been built in the right-hand corner of the bricked floor space. This room contained a writing-table, some shelves, and the police-officer's guns. In one side of the weather-boarding there was a small wooden-barred window, looking towards the front of the house, and a door in the other. Two staircases, one at the front one at the back of the house, gave access to the upper floor.

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Fifteen years ago, this house was occupied by an officer, named George, and amongst his servants were two Malays, natives of Java, named Merâwi and Adam. Merâwi was the orderly ; a married man of about twenty-five, whose wife belonged to Malacca, and had been left there by her husband. Adam was a boy of nineteen, unmarried, his master's general servant. These two Javanese occupied the same room, and, to all appearances, were the best of friends.

One morning George was awakened at day-dawn, before it was really light, by hearing a noise, which he took to be the manifestation of his Chinese cook's delight in the advent of some festival. There were three reports, and George went down the back stairs to the ground floor to put a stop to the nuisance ; but everything seemed quiet, and there was no one stirring. He walked out into the garden and round to the front of the house. On his way he heard another explosion, and, as the noise seemed to come from inside the house, he tried the front door, found it locked, and then, with a corporal of police, whom he met outside, he returned to the back. They entered the large ground-floor room, and George went to the window of the office, looked in, but saw no one. He then looked in at the door of the office, which was open, and saw the leg of a man who was stretched on the floor. A lamp was sent for, and a closer inspection discovered Adam, lying on his left side, within the office, across the

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doorway. He had no coat on, the upper part of his body was bare, and on the right side of his chest was a hole—evidently a gun-shot wound—while a much larger hole was seen on his back, by the right shoulder-blade. He was dead.

A further search disclosed Merâwi, lying on the floor on the other side of the writing-table. He also was dead, with a ghastly wound behind his right ear. Between his legs lay a double-barrelled shot gun belonging to George, the muzzle on the dead man's chest, the stock between his knees. Both barrels contained the cases of exploded cartridges. Adam had a slight shot-wound, and blood, on his left hand; while, on a shelf, was a canister containing cartridges, and this tin was smeared with blood, as from the hand of some one who had taken out cartridges. The barrels of the gun were also blood-stained, and an empty cartridge-case lay in a pool of blood close to Merâwi's head.

The best medical authority available, an apothecary, was sent for, inquiries were instituted, and an inquest was held. Beyond the bare facts stated above, no very important information was gained. The additional evidence went to show that Merâwi, before he came to George, had been employed elsewhere in a different capacity. His wife was with him then, and Adam knew them both. Merâwi left the country with his wife, and, only twelve days before returned, alone, to

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take service with George. Every one testified to the friendship of the two men, and the sentry on guard had seen both of them leave their room, first Merâwi, then Adam, and go into the house to their work. Neither was afterwards seen alive, and there had been no sound of voices or any sort of quarrelling. The first shot was fired about half an hour, or less, after they entered the dining-room, and many witnesses spoke to hearing at least five shots fired, at short intervals.

The office where the tragedy occurred was very dark, and so small that the feet of Merâwi, as he lay on the floor, were less than a yard from the body of Adam. The shelf, on which stood the canister of cartridges, was within reach of Adam. In the room, George kept four shot-guns and four rifles, but only one of these weapons had been used. Adam always kept his kit-box in this room, and, though the box was found unlocked, nothing in it appeared to have been disturbed. Then there were two empty cartridge cases in the gun, another on the floor, and four more on the shelf. One of these last was blood-stained. There were three separate shot marks on the wall of the room, about two feet apart, and all between four and five feet from the ground, that is about the height of a Malay's chest. The marks were on the wall behind where Merâwi lay, and George thought they had been made by shots fired from the level of the floor.

Further, the skin round the wounds of both men

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was scorched, and the muzzle of the gun must in both cases, have been close to them when the fatal shots were fired. The whole charge of shot had penetrated Merâwi's head, and lodged there, death being instantaneous. In the case of Adam, he might have lived for five minutes after receiving the wound in the chest. The slight wound on his hand was, in the opinion of the apothecary, the result of seizing or attempting to seize, the muzzle of the gun at the moment of discharge.

Beyond these facts, it may be noted that, a week earlier, Merâwi asked a corporal of police, stationed in the fort, to pardon him, and when the corporal said: "For what?" Merâwi replied: "Never mind, for nothing." After the catastrophe, a loaded rifle, belonging to George, was found concealed under a plank beneath Adam's bed.

There the matter remained, and no more light has ever been thrown on this strange crime. It would not be difficult to supply a cause, and give an apparently exact explanation of what really occurred; only that would be foreign to my purpose. It is possible to hazard a theory, but the truth must remain in doubt.

The case excited a good deal of interest amongst Malays, but to-day they confess they are no wiser than they ever were. In their minds there could only be one motive, jealousy. Yet there has never

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## AN UNSOLVED MYSTERY

been a particle of evidence to give colour to this suspicion. The men were apparently the best of friends, always and up to the moment of their deaths. There was no sound of quarrelling, no call for help even, yet they seem to have killed each other, and, from the number of shots fired, the intention to kill was a determined one.

Then, as to what actually took place, there are two suppositions. Either Merâwi, for some unknown reason, shot at and mortally wounded Adam, who was still able to wrench the gun from his assailant, reload it, and fire a fatal shot before his own death ; or Merâwi shot Adam and then committed suicide. Though the second of these suppositions, if correct, would furnish an instance of Malay murder and suicide which has few parallels, it is still a theory which, except for one difficulty, seems the most acceptable. The fact that Merâwi asked pardon of the corporal shows that he meant to do something desperate. The loaded rifle under Adam's bed may have been put there by Merâwi, for convenient use, more probably than by Adam for his own protection. Merâwi first entered the house, and he had plenty of time to load the gun, and, either wait quietly in the office, or, once there, call Adam in, when the latter had entered the dining-room. It would be very dark, but at, such close quarters, and out of four or five shots, one would surely tell. Then,

## ALSO AND PERHAPS

if the murderer was possessed by some mania (as his speech to the corporal suggests), it is not altogether unlikely that he would turn the weapon against himself, and the position in which the gun was found, with its muzzle close to the wound in his head, makes this probable.

On the other hand, there are the empty blood-stained cartridge, the canister and gun-barrels also smeared with blood, and the fact that, while Adam had a wounded and bleeding hand, Merâwi's hands were free of any such stain. Taking all things into consideration, it seems, therefore, more probable that Merâwi, armed and waiting in the darkness of the tiny room, shot Adam with the first or second barrel, as soon as the latter was inside the open doorway ; Adam's hand being slightly grazed in an attempt to seize or ward off the muzzle of the gun. Very likely the first shot took effect in his chest, and, while Merâwi was trying to put in another, Adam wrested the gun from his grasp ; the second shot doing no damage beyond cutting his hand. Then Adam, from the doorway, the only means of exit, might reach the cartridges on the shelf, and reload the gun, and continue firing at his adversary ; till they both fell and the gun dropped, strangely enough, between the knees of Merâwi. Adam, grievously wounded as he was, might even have collapsed on to the floor, and succeeded in shooting Merâwi from that position, as suggested by George.

## AN UNSOLVED MYSTERY

No witness was there to tell the tale ; no motive could be found for either of the murdered men to attack the other ; not a single exclamation was uttered, though help was within easy call. If imperfect light, and want of skill in the use of a gun, explain the number of shots fired, there are still strange details in the position of Merâwi's wound, the fact that the canister and one empty cartridge case were smeared with blood, while others had no such stains. The gun, too, with its blood-stained barrels, lay between the knees of Merâwi, whose hands were unwounded and unsoiled.

Speculation has worn itself out, and the case must remain an unexplained mystery ; like another, to which reference is made in the following extract from a report by the Deputy Commissioner of Police in the Malay State of Sēlangor :

“A crime of a very singular character was perpetrated on the 20th October 1897. On that day there was found, at Pudu, an ear, suspended from a post, with a linen placard attached to it. On this placard it was stated, amongst other matters, that the fellow to the ear would be found at the tenth mile beyond Sungei Besi. On the 23rd the other ear was discovered, suspended in the same way as the first, with a placard to the same purport as the one originally found.

“It took some time to ascertain exactly what the inscription on the placard meant. To those familiar

## ALSO AND PERHAPS

with thieves' language the signification was no doubt fairly clear, but not so to others. A rude delineation, on the placard first found, aided a comprehension of the information intended to be conveyed. The second was also illustrated, but not so extensively.

"The story, when deciphered, came to this, that some one had wronged a brother in his domestic relations; that a historic personage who sinned in the same way had met an untimely fate; that the brother alluded to had also been despoiled of his property; that any one informing would do so at risk, and that the placard was published for the information of the righteous.

"The covert threat probably had its effect; for all efforts to discover the criminals have, so far, proved futile. Much assistance was afforded this Department by the Chinese Secretary, and the Captain China<sup>1</sup> offered a reward of five hundred dollars for information that should lead to the discovery of the offenders, but the matter is still unexplained.

"The popular notion is that the affair is a Secret Society outrage; but popular notions usually trend that way. So far no discovery has been made. If the mutilated person is still living he must either be in confinement or has left the country; or he is hiding, in terror lest he lose his life if he seek retaliation."

<sup>1</sup> The head of all the Chinese in the State of Sēlangor.

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